The Crimean Tatars

THE DIASPORA EXPERIENCE AND

THE FORGING OF A NATION

BY

BRIAN G. WILLIAMS

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Any errors, mistakes and blunders I have made here are of course my own and I absolve all those who have so kindly assisted me of any blame for inaccuracies found in this work.

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GLOSSARY

A Note on Turkish and Tatar Pronunciation

I use Turkish and Tatar letters throughout this study and have utilized the Turkish alphabet in following Turkish Latin orthography. Turkish-Tatar letters are pronounced as follows:

ç = English 'ch' as in church. Tatar=Çelebi is pronounced Chelebi, Bahçesaray is pronounced Bahchesaray.
ş = English 'sh' as in shout. Tatar=Yeşil is pronounced Yeshil, Şahin is pronounced Shahin.
c = English 'j' as in Jack. Tatar=Cami is pronounced Jami.

The Turkish letters ö, ü, ı are pronounced as back versions of o, u i. I follow the Library of Congress system for transliterations from Russian to English.

Turkish, Tatar and Russian Glossary

ağa	lord.
ak toprak	white soil or white land, the religiously-defined sacred soil of the Islamic Ottoman Empire.
aul	village or nomadic tribal encampment.
Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR)	the second highest ranking ethno-territorial administrative unit in the USSR. ASSRs fell below the Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR) in administrative ranking in the Soviet Union.
bey	a Tatar tribal leader, there were traditionally four powerful *beys* in the Crimea during the period of the Khanate with the *bey* of the Shirin clan being recognized as paramount. In later periods this term was translated as sir.
Buçak	Literally 'the Corner' in Kipchak-Nogai Tatar. The plains of southern Moldavia also known as Bessarabia. This was an extension of the Desht-i Kipchak plain.

Caliph
successor to the Prophet Mohammed, in the 19th century the Ottoman sultans revived their claims to this title which can (with considerable controversy) be traced back to the 16th century Ottoman conquest of Mamluk Egypt by Sultan Selim I.

cemaat
a Tatar agricultural commune. This form of communal land ownership in the Crimea had its origins in the pre-Mongol system of land-ownership found among the ancient peoples of the southern Crimea and among the nomads' traditional collective ownership over pastures.

Circassians
the indigenous Islamic population of the north-western Caucasus mountains and eastern coastline of the Black Sea. The Circassian highlanders and coastal-dwellers came under varying degrees of Crimean Tatar control during the period of the Crimean Khanate. Most of the Circassian population was brutally expelled from the Caucasus between 1859-1864 by Russian forces. They were scattered throughout the Balkans, the Middle East and Anatolia (where there is a large diaspora today). The Circassians are known in Tatar-Turkish as Cerkes and were, prior to their expulsion, the largest ethnic group in the northern Caucasus.

Çöl
the steppes which make up the northern two thirds of the Crimea, the homeland of the nomadic Nogai Tatars who spoke a Kipchak Turkic language known as the *çöl agzi* (steppe dialect).

Dar al Harb
the Abode of War (with the infidel), non-Islamic lands.

Dar al Islam
the Abode of Islam, lands where Islamic law is practiced.

Desht i Kïpchak
lit. the 'Desert of the Kipchaks' this refers to the vast steppe lands of what is today the southern Ukraine and northern Caucasus. This grassy plain extended from Moldavia to the east of the Volga Ural mesopotamia and was

nomadized by the Turkic Kipchaks (1000-1238 AD) and their descendants the Kipchak-Nogai Tatars.

destan
a ballad, song or legend.

evlad i fatih han
lit. the descendants of Mehmed Khan (i.e. Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, 1451-1481). This term refers to refugees and migrants (and their descendants) from the Balkans who were expelled from this land during the great retreat of Muslims following the Ottoman collapse and retreat from the Balkans during the 19th century.

Golden Horde
the steppe state established by Chingiz Khan's grandson Batu Khan which included most of Russia, the Desht-i Kipchak and the Crimea, the fringes of Eastern Europe and parts of Central Asia. In later periods known as the Great Horde. This state collapsed in the early 15th century and was replaced by the several splinter khanates including the Crimean Khanate, Astrakhan Khanate, Kazan Khanate, Siberian Khanate and Nogai Tatar confederation.

hijra
in this context a migration based on religious principles. While originally referring to the emigration of Mohammed and his followers from Mecca to Medina, it came to refer to a migration from the land of the infidel to the land of Islam to preserve one's religious identity.

hoja
an Islamic scholar or teacher.

imam
a prayer leader in a mosque.

jadid
from the Arabic *usul-i jadid* (or cedid), i.e. 'the new order'. A reform movement among the Muslims of the Russian Empire which sought to modernize Russian Islamic culture. Followers of this reformist model were known as *jadids*.

kara gün
lit. the black day, the day of the deportation of the Crimean Tatars, May 18, 1944. This anniversary is commemorated every year

among the Crimean Tatars on May 18th.

Kerch Peninsula — a peninsula located on the eastern Crimea, site of the ancient principality of Mithridates and home to Nogai herders.

Kipchak — one of the great divisions of the Turkic language (the other being Oghuz, i.e. the Turkish spoken by the Ottoman Turks) spoken by the Kipchaks who roamed what is today the southern Ukraine and northern Crimea from the mid 11th century until their conquest by the Mongols between 1238 and 1240. The Mongols eventually adopted this Turkic language and became known as 'Tatars.' The nomadic Tatars of the northern Crimea and adjacent steppes in the southern Ukraine, known as the Nogai Tatars, spoke a Kipchak dialect as did the neighboring Kazakhs.

kolkhoz — a collective farm in the Communist period.

korenizatsiia — lit. 'rooting' a policy of positive discrimination towards ethnic groups in their own republics instituted during the first decade of Soviet rule. This policy provided national groups with certain privileges in their territorial units or Soviet republics and was a seen as a means for Sovietizing non-Russian ethno-national groups. This policy was ended by Stalin in the early 1930s.

korennoi narod — lit. rooted or native people. This Russian term gained great significance during the *korenizatsiia* period. Ethno-national groups officially recognized as a the *korennoi narod* of a republic received special privileges in their ethnically-based territory.

Kuban — the plains of the northern Caucasus inhabited by Nogai herdsmen.

kurultay — originally a meeting of the Crimea's tribal chieftains to chose a new khan, traditionally held on the cliffs above the Crimean village of Karasu Bazar. This term was revived by the Crimean Tatar nationalists in the early 20th century and came to mean 'congress' in 1917. Since the collapse of the USSR this term has been again revived and the repatriated Crimean Tatar exiles have held several *kurultays* since their return to the Crimea.

medrese — an Islamic institution of higher learning, a seminary.

mejlis — parliament, since 1991 the parallel government elected by the Crimean Tatars who have returned to the Crimea. While not officially recognized by the Ukrainian government as an official parliament it has *de facto* become the representative body of the Crimean Tatars in the Crimea. Mustafa Dzhemilev and Refat Chubarov were its most prominent leaders in the 1990s. There are also regional *mejlises* which are elected in the Tatar settlements to deal with more localized issues.

mekteb — a primary school with an Islamically-based curriculum.

Milli Firka — the National Party, established by Crimean Tatar nationalists during the Russian Revolution. This was the Crimean Tatar nationalist organization which attempted to seize power in the Crimea between 1917 and 1918.

mirza — the lower Tatar nobility, this class was largely co-opted by the Russian government after the Russian conquest of the Crimea.

muhacir — one who emigrates from the land of the unbeliever to preserve religious customs and identity. Someone who partakes in *hijra*.

mullah — in the Crimean context, usually translated as the head of a parish mosque. While often having only a rudimentary knowledge of Arabic these village leaders had a strong influence over their flock.

müfti — the highest Islamic jurist in the Crimea. Appointed by the Russian government after the Russian conquest of the Crimea.

NKVD predecessor to the KGB, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs.

Nogai Tatars the Kipchak Turkic speaking nomadic descendants of the Great Horde who roamed over the southern steppes of the Ukraine, the Kuban plain of the northern Caucasus, the northern shores of the Caspian Sea and the plains of the northern Crimea. This group was ethnically and culturally distinct from the Tats (southern Crimean Tatar farmers) who lived in the Crimea's mountains and on its coast.

oblast an administrative district in the USSR. The Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was demoted to an *oblast* after the 1944 deportation.

Oghuz one of the great divisions of the Turkic language (the other being Kipchak), spoken by the Turks of Anatolia and the Turkified Tat-Tatars of the Crimea's southern coast.

pomeshchiks the Russian landowning class.

rodina Russian for homeland, in the Soviet period the USSR.

samozakhvat a self-seized plot of land. With the return of the Crimean Tatars to the Crimea after 1989 the repatriates seized land and built *samostrois* (self construct) houses on their illegally seized plots.

sancak an Ottoman province, often known as a *liva*. The southern coast of the Crimean peninsula was an Ottoman *sancak* directly ruled from Istanbul from 1475-1774 and known as the Sancak of Kefe.

shariah Islamic law. In the Muslim world this governed many aspects of society that in the West were governed by lay law.

sovkhoz Soviet state farm.

spetsposelenets lit. a special settler. The term used to refer to deportees settled in 'special commandant camps' in the USSR during the 1930s and 1940s.

sürgün exile, the Crimean Tatars speak of the *ilk sürgün* (the 'first exile' in the Ottoman Balkans and Anatolia following the conquest of their homeland by the Russians) and the *ikinci sürgün* (the 'second exile' in Soviet Central Asia from 1944-1989).

tamgha originally a clan marker used by the nomads of the steppe. The Crimean Khans of the Giray dynasty adapted an imperial *tamgha* from the Khans of the Golden Horde known as the *Tarak Tamgha* (the 'Cleft Seal'). This emblem was later adapted as a nationalist symbol by 20th century Crimean Tatar nationalists.

Tat originally a pejorative term used by the nomadic, Kipchak speaking Tatars of the Crimea to refer to later converts to Islam with non-Tatar origins (such as the Goths, Armenians, Italians, and Greeks). Those Tats in the mountains spoke a hybrid Oghuz-Kipchak Turkic language while those on the coast spoke an Oghuz Turkic language. Also used to refer to non-Turkic peoples in the Caucasus.

Tauride Province the Russian province of the Crimea which included land on the Ukrainian mainland.

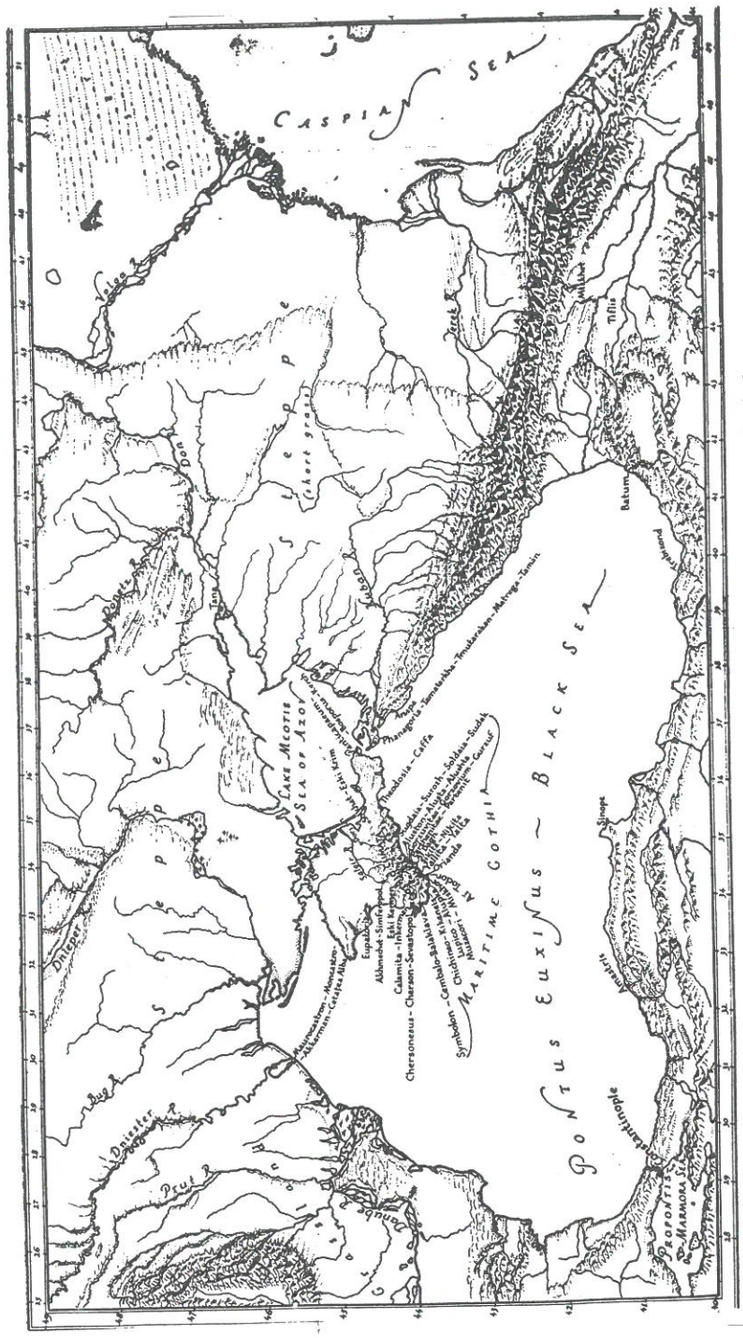
tepreş a traditional Crimean Tatar spring festival with ancient pre-Islamic roots in the Crimea's past. Celebrated in the diaspora as well.

Tercüman the first Crimean Tatar newspaper (actually distributed beyond the Crimea) which began publication in 1883. Published by the great Crimean Tatar reformer Ismail Gasprinsky *Tercüman* (translated as the *Translator* and also known in Russian as *Perevodchik*) was an important vehicle for introducing modernist ideas to the Russian Turkic Muslims for almost 30 years.

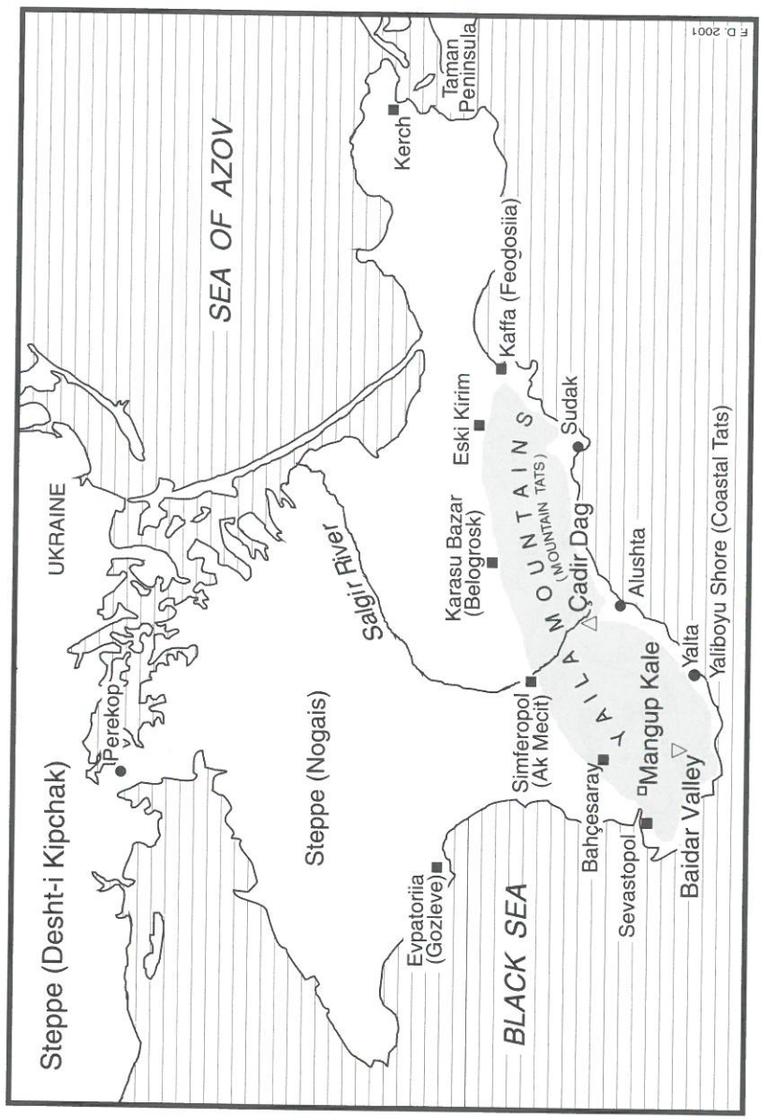
ulema lit. men of knowledge *(ilm)*. Loosely translated as the Islamic 'clergy' (there was no official clergy hierarchy in Sunni Islam like that found in Western Catholicism), this term applied to

	Islamic scholars, *mullahs*, prayer leaders etc.
umma	the world-wide body of Muslim believers. Prior to the advent of Western style nationalism in the Muslim world this sense of belonging to the ecumenical Muslim brotherhood often superseded loyalty to narrower ethnicity or region.
vakıf	lit. property held in *mortmain*. Referred to a vast network of pious endowments of land given over the centuries by wealthy Muslim sponsors for the support of religious institutions; such as mosques, *medreses*, *türbes* (mausoleums), or fountains.
vatan	homeland, this was the name adapted by the underground Crimean Tatar nationalist organization formed just prior to the Russian Revolution. Traditionally the Crimean Tatars and other nationally undeveloped groups in the Middle East, Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia did not have a wider, modern sense of homeland in the Western nationalist context and considered their village or district to be a *vatan*.
Yaila	the coastal mountains of the southern Crimea, also translated as a mountain pasture. This was the homeland of the mountain Tats who had diverse ethnic origins going back to the Ostrogoths and other non-Turkic groups.
Yaliboyu	lit. shore or coast, the southern coast of the Crimea. Tat-Tatars from this region were known as Yaliboyu Tats and spoke Oghuz Turkish.
yeşil ada	lit. green island, the Crimea.
yurt	homeland, also used to refer to portable tent of the nomads.

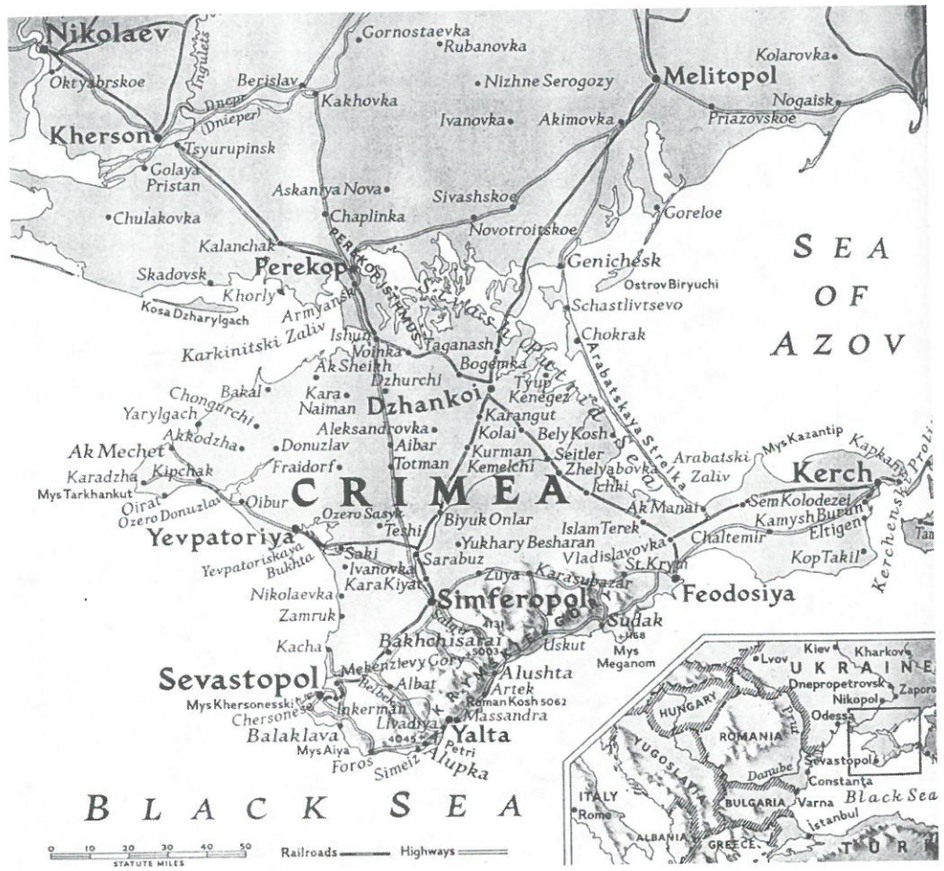
MAPS
1–5



1. The Crimea and the Black Sea during the Medieval Period.

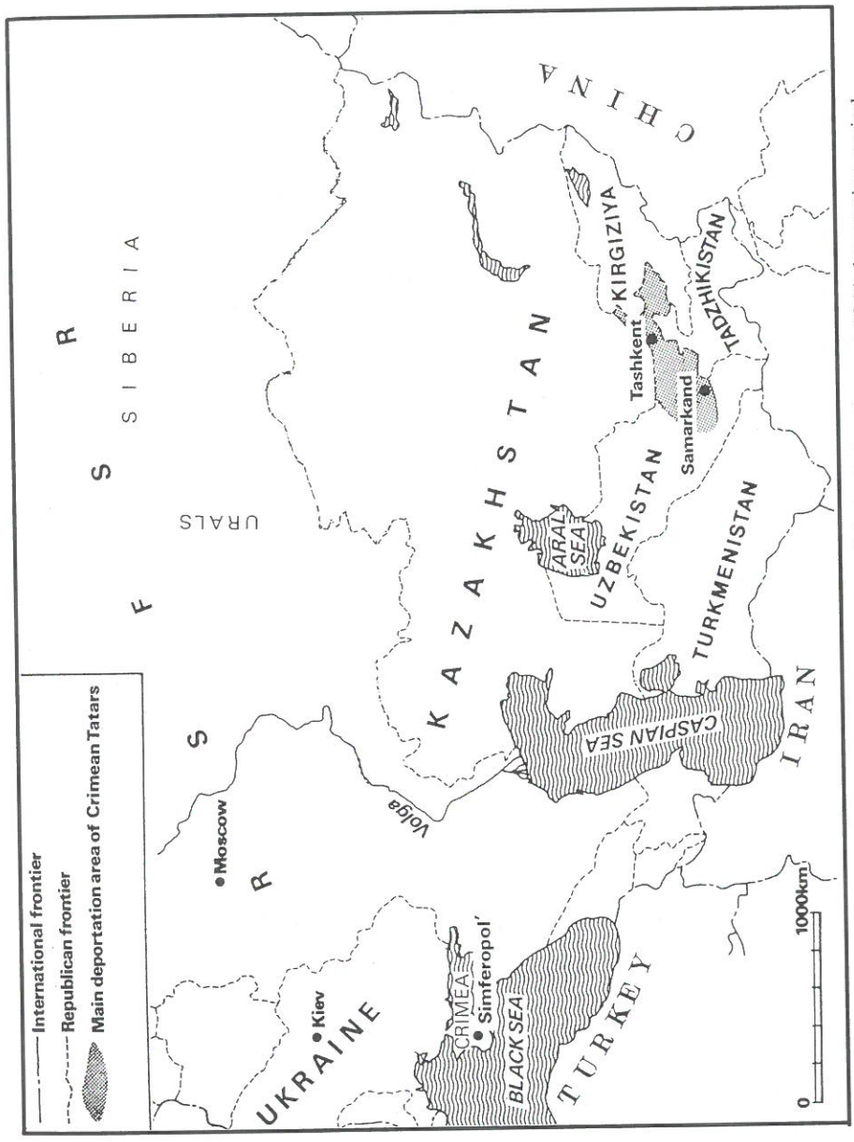


2. Major towns of the Crimean peninsula.



3. Map of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic featuring towns and topographic features with original Tatar names. Most towns were given Slavic names following the 1944 deportation of the Crimean Tatars.

4. Map of the Dobruca.



5. Areas of Crimean Tatar concentration in Ce in Central Asia during the post-1944 deportation period.

INTRODUCTION

THE CRIMEAN TATARS AS A CASE STUDY IN ETHNO-NATIONALISM AND GROUP DISPLACEMENT

In the fall of 1991 the Nuri and Lilya Shevkiev and their son Emir and daughter Elmaz, a Crimean Tatar family living in Samarkand, Uzbekistan surprised their neighbors by selling their family house and most of their possessions and tendering their resignations from lucrative jobs. They then prepared to leave a land that had been their people's home for almost half a century. Throughout Uzbekistan the Crimean Tatars' stunned Central Asian neighbors watched as tens of thousands of their friends and colleagues of Crimean Tatar origin, who had long lived in their midst, joined the Shevkievs and migrated as families, agricultural communes, or whole villages in a westward direction towards the distant shores of the Black Sea. As the Shevkievs drove west with other Crimean Tatar families in a protective convoy over the deserts of post-Soviet Central Asia and across the valleys of the turbulent north Caucasian flank, their level of anticipation rose for they were approaching the cherished Crimean homeland which had been denied to their people since World War II.

Brutally deported *en masse* from their homeland on the fringes of Eastern Europe to the deserts of the USSR's Central Asian republics during World War II by Josef Stalin, whole generations of Crimean Tatars had grown up in the depths of Soviet Asia far from their peninsular home on the Black Sea. With the collapse of Soviet central authority from 1989-1991 the Shevkievs and thousands like them were partaking in a return migration to their once-forbidden homeland. This migration of a quarter of a million Crimean Tatars was part of a mass, uncontrollable movement that had all the drama of the Jews' return to the lost lands of Zion.

Although the tragic story of the Crimean Tatar exile and subsequent repatriation was largely eclipsed by more noteworthy events related to the devolution of Communist power in Eurasia (such as the outbreak of bloody conflicts in the Balkans and Caucasus), the experience of the Shevkievs and tens of thousands of other exiled Crimean Tatars who have returned to their once forbidden home-

land since 1989 is certainly one of the more dramatic accounts to come from this turbulent period of mass migration, ethnic cleansing and post-empire instability in the former Soviet Union. The end of empire migrations and ethnic conflict in the former Soviet space which have also seen millions of Slavs migrate back to Russia from the Transcaucasus, Baltics and Central Asia are in many ways reminiscent of those seen when the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires disintegrated during World War I. The collapse of the Habsburg Empire and Kaiserreich led to the displacement of Germans, Hungarians and other Balkan peoples while the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire from 1876 to 1918 led to a massive retreat by millions of Muslims to the heart of the sultan's collapsing empire.

While the Crimean Tatars' migration from Central Asia to the Crimea can be seen as part of the larger post-empire migrations in the former Soviet republics of Eurasia which have seen millions of former Soviet citizens displaced, it is also one of the most unusual examples of migration in East European, Balkan and Central Asian history and has its own particular dynamics. The Crimean Tatars, an eclectic Turkic-Muslim ethnic group that claims direct descent from the Goths, Pontic Greeks, Armenians, the Tatars of the Golden Horde and other East European ethnic groups, have a long and tragic history of displacement that makes their case unique.

Although the hidden story of the cruel 1944 deportation of the Crimean Tatars has gradually come to light in the West with the recent declassification of long-off limits KGB documents on the subject, few realize that the dispersal of the Crimean Tatars from their homeland actually began during the Russian Imperial period in a process that saw this ancient people come close to extinction. Most of those Crimean Tatars fleeing the Crimean Peninsula during the Russian Imperial period migrated to the lands of the Ottoman Empire and a Crimean Tatar diaspora was actually formed on the sultan's lands in the Balkans and Anatolia prior to 1944 total cleansing of this people from the Crimea.

It was only in the 20th century that the Crimean Tatars ceased to abandon their ancestral land and, under the influence of nationalism, came to construct the Crimean Peninsula as a 'Fatherland' and themselves as the nation linked to its soil. It was the transmission of this communal attachment to the Crimea as a national Homeland that allowed the Crimean Tatars to sustain their identi-

ty during the long Soviet exile period and eventually made their return to the Crimea in the 1990s possible.

The extraordinary post-Soviet return of this widely dispersed people to their homeland can thus be seen as a reversal of the Crimean Tatars' centuries long process of out-migration and forced exile and provides a unique 'laboratory' for studying the interaction between the intertwined phenomena of nationalism and migration in the shaping of group identity. The history of the Crimean Tatars has been largely shaped by their experience of migration and nationalism and a critical analysis of the role these phenomena have played in this people's history provides historians, political geographers, anthropologists and political scientists alike with a rare opportunity to study the role nationalization and migratory patterns play in the shaping of group identity. Those studying nationalism and migration have, in the Crimean Tatar repatriation, been given a unique opportunity to study a nation being reborn in its homeland after centuries of colonial era out-migration and mass uprooting during the Soviet period.

This work will focus on the Crimean Tatars' experience of migration, exile and displacement, from the Russian Imperial period to the post-Soviet setting, with the aim of exploring the ways in which these processes have shaped the communal identity of this largely unstudied ethno-national group. An effort will also be made here to trace the historical process that saw the transformation of this traditionally-organized Muslim community of apathetic peasants into a politically mobilized, secular nation possessing a well defined, modern sense of national identity and a strong attachment to a secularly-defined homeland. In the process, a thread which appears throughout this work will be the study of the Crimean Tatars' gradual construction of the Crimean Peninsula as a 'Fatherland' in the Western nationalist sense.

As will become evident, the history of the Crimean Tatars presents one of the most unique examples of the process of nation and homeland construction in Eurasian history. In perhaps no other ethnic, cultural or geographic setting are the differences between an ethnic group's pre-modern, tribal-religious identity and it secular-nationalist, territorialized identity so glaringly obvious.

In addition to tracing this process of homeland construction, it is intended that this case study will provide insight into the ways in which Eastern Europe's under-studied Muslim ethnies have devel-

oped their contested modern identities under Slavic-Orthodox and Communist rule. From the toppled minarets of Sarajevo and the gutted villages of Kosovo to the bombed rubble of Grozny-Djohar, Chechnya, it has become apparent that Eastern Europe's Muslim ethno-national groups are increasingly active in their efforts to establish their ethnic identities and stake political claims to territory. An analysis of the Crimean Tatars' experience can contribute to an understanding of these larger issues related to identity, territory and nationalism among the Muslim groups of Eurasia who dwell on the precarious fault line between the Orthodox and Muslim worlds.

In the case of the Crimean Tatars, it should also be noted that their history is one of uprooting and mass deportation and has many similarities with the tragic histories of the Armenians, Jews, Tutsis, Palestinians and other forced diasporic groups. With communities dispersed throughout Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and the United States, the Crimean Tatars are united in their emotional links to their lost Crimean homeland and can be seen today as an archetypal diaspora group.

During visits to Crimean Tatar communities in Central Asia and the Crimea in 1997, and through interviews with Crimean Tatars from Turkey and the United States in 1998 and 1999, the author came to realize that it was in fact the concept of a lost homeland that provided the primary marker of Crimean Tatar group identity for members of this community in the various diaspora contexts. The increasing body of comparative literature on the phenomenon of diaspora has, however, overlooked the case of the Crimean Tatars. It is hoped that a historical analysis of the process that led to the formation of these dispersed communities will lead to a new understanding of the Crimean Tatars as a diasporic nation.

On the most basic level, however, this work is the ethno-history of a small community that has found itself scattered over time and space, from the war torn plains of the Danube in the Ottoman-controlled provinces of what would become Romania and Bulgaria, to the deserts of Soviet Central Asia. While many of the chapters of the Crimean Tatars' remarkable history thus belong, properly speaking, to Ottoman, Turkish, Central Asian, Balkan, Russian and Soviet history, there was a time when the Crimea, and the Tatars living in this marginal zone, belonged to no other lands. This was an era when the Crimean Tatars were tied only to their peninsular

homeland on the edge of Europe and to the adjacent steppes ruled by their native khans. It is to this epoch that the historian must turn in order to fully understand the Crimean Tatars of today and to grasp the ways in which this community's tragic history of displacement and separation from a lost homeland has forged its modern national identity.

CHAPTER ONE

ORIGINS. THE 'ETHNOGENESIS' OF THE TATARS OF THE CRIMEA

It has been said that history is never dead in Eastern Europe and, since the collapse of Communism in the region, history has indeed become a contested zone on which nationalities fight battles that are often paralleled by those fought on the modern battlefield. History has been used in this region by nationalists as a powerful tool to mobilize populations for political agendas that all too often end in bloodshed.

Not surprisingly, many of the struggles in this region, from the Balkans to the Caucasus, have their roots in competing nations' historical claims to territory. From the Macedonian-Greek dispute over the former Yugoslav republic's use of the historic name 'Macedonia' to Armenian claims to the disputed Nagorno-Karabagh enclave in neighboring Azerbaijan, the nationalities of this region determine their political identities and territorial claims on the basis of their 'national histories'.

All too frequently Westerners take the nationalist jargon and historic claims to land of this sort by competing national groups at face value and do not subject them to critical scrutiny. In the Balkans or Caucasus, for example, the Western media has blithely passed off modern nationalist conflicts as being the result of 'centuries of ethnic antagonism.' In these and other instances, Western accounts often overlook the fact that in such regions as Kosovo, Bosnia, Nagorno-Karabagh, and the Crimea, Christian and Muslim lived side by side for centuries in multi-ethnic hamlets rarely engaging in ethno-communal conflict. While inter-marriage was rare, Muslim and Christian ethnic groups worked in the same bazaars, shared the same fields and co-existed in a timeless fashion that has, since the breakup of the multi-national Ottoman and Russian Empires, disappeared. While confessional clashes between Muslims and Christians did take place here (one must not make the mistake of glamorizing the traditional state of affairs in the turbulent region), these conflicts did not exhibit the savage ferocity of later national wars and ethnic cleansings

which were aimed at creating ethnically 'pure' nation states on the ruins of heterogeneous empires.

It soon becomes apparent that a more nuanced understanding of conflicts in the region and competing claims to territory is needed in order to grasp the roots of this sort of strife and cleansing on the basis of ethnicity which has all too often been glibly passed off as being the result of 'intractable historical animosity'. In the Crimea, as in other regions where the Muslim and Eastern Orthodox worlds have for centuries met, one must critically explore history in order to understand the ways in which it has been used, and misused, to stake historic claims to territory by competing national groups.

As in the Balkans and the Caucasus, Western accounts of the Crimea often reflect the biases, propaganda and nationalist rhetoric of the populations and governments involved in staking claims to the oft contested peninsula. The Crimean Tatars level charges of centuries of 'genocide' and 'ethnic cleansing' against the Russian and Soviet governments while Soviet propagandists and contemporary Russian nationalists often described the Crimean Tatars as 'Mongol aggressors and occupiers of the Crimea', 'traitors to the homeland' or 'Muslim fanatics.' These and other claims to be explored below must be subjected to careful scrutiny in order to provide an accurate picture of the history of this disputed piece of real estate.

History and competing historical claims are, as will be shown, certainly alive and well in the Crimea and have served as catalysts for the formation of political movements among both the Russians and the Crimean Tatars on the peninsula. Tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars returning to the Crimea since the collapse of the Soviet Union, for instance, believe that they are the indigenous, autochthonous population of the Crimea and claim a special right to this land which is based on centuries of historical presence in the region. The Crimean Tatars of the former Soviet Union (the Commonwealth of Independent States, CIS), regardless of their level of political sophistication, are firm in their belief that they are the descendants of the oldest inhabitants of the Crimean Peninsula and, as such, they believe they have a unique historic claim to this contested plot of land.

The Crimean Tatars resent Soviet efforts to portray their ethnic group as relatively late, Mongol-era 'occupiers' of the Crimea and go to great lengths to stress their pre-Mongol 'roots' in the soil of the peninsula. The Crimean Tatar historian, Aider Memetov, summed up the Crimean Tatars' view of the past claiming "Up to our present day the naive view has not died that the Crimean Tatars are the direct descendants of the Mongol conquerors who penetrated the Crimea in the 13th century."[1]

On the other hand, the Crimea, which was described in the works of Pushkin, favored as a health resort by scores of Russians, and the scene of some of Russia's greatest feats of heroism, has a special place in the Russian heart. Many Crimean Russians see the Crimea as a part of their historic *rodina* (homeland) and have tremendous emotional attachment to a land that they believe has been rendered sacred by the countless sacrifices their people have made fighting for its soil. As any Russian historian will tell you, the Crimea has been tied to the Russian people for over two hundred years only at a heavy cost in Russian lives.

As is so often the case in the region, history is of course not the private domain of historians in either camp. Politicians and ethnic entrepreneurs on both sides also make frequent use of this science to rally support among their compatriots for political action. Mustafa Dzhemilev, the pre-eminent post-World War II leader of the Crimean Tatar national movement, justified his people's claim to the Crimean Peninsula to the 1997 Congress of European National Minorities on historical grounds claiming:

> The self-designation of our people, 'Crimean Tatar', leads many people to error and they depict us only as the direct descendants of the Tatar-Mongols who invaded the Crimea in the beginning of the 13th century. *In point of fact, they are a people that formed on the territory of the Crimea peninsula* (emphasis mine). Over the course of many centuries, many tribes and peoples settled on the territory of the Crimea. Regimes, dictators, religions and cultures changed but in those times, as is well known, mass deportations, genocide of peoples and ethnic cleansing of territory was not practiced—this became sufficiently frequent only in our enlightened century. Therefore, with a firm basis, it may be confirmed that in the formation of the Turkish base of our Crimean Tatar nation there are definite waves of all races and ethnic groups who settled in the Crimea from ancient times.[2]

An analysis of the Crimean Tatars' historical claim to their homeland will shed light on this contested history and will create a foundation for understanding this nation's contemporary perceptions of

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[1] Aider Memetov. *Krymskie Tatary*. Simferopol; Anaiurt. 1993. p. 2.

[2] Mustafa Dzhemilev. "Vostanovlenie Prav Krymskikh Tatar." *Kirim*. July 24,1997. p. 3.

itself and its link to its peninsular homeland. In addition, an understanding of the geography of the Crimea and the way in which it shaped the formation of a theoretically 'homogenous' Crimean Tatar nation will shed light on the often misunderstood nature of this people and their later struggles for unity and nationhood.

The Crimean Tatars' struggles for national security and homeland has its roots in the murky pages of the ancient history of this small, but geographically diverse, region. It is only by understanding the history of the formation of the Crimean Tatar nation (which was actually far from being a homogenous ethnic group for most of its history) and the divergent nature of this people's homeland that one can come to know the contemporary identity and current claims of this nation to the Crimean Peninsula. The ethno-historian must therefore make a brief, but necessary, background excursion through the history of the Crimea's separate cultural and geographic zones in order to understand the mixed ethnology and history of the people who would eventually unite to form the modern Crimean Tatar nation.

The Arrival of the Mongols and Islam in the Crimea

The city of Eski Kırım (Old Fortress), built on a strategic spot in the eastern Crimea where the southern mountain chain meets the plains of the north is a starting point for understanding the Tatars of the Crimea. Eski Kırım was once known as Solkhat and inhabited by Armenians, Greeks, Italian colonists and nomadic Turkic tribes known as the Kipchaks. Solkhat's location on the edge of the wide Crimean plain made it a thriving emporium for trade between the settled population of the Crimea's south and the nomadic Turkic Kipchak tribes of the vast Desht-i Kipchak ('Kipchak Steppe', the plains of contemporary southern Ukraine and northern Crimea, i.e. the western extension of the Eurasian plain).

In the mid-13th century, the always precarious balance of peace between the Solkhat townsmen and their nomadic neighbors collapsed when a powerful new nomadic people appeared from the east. In the late 1230s, Batu Khan, grandson of Chingis Khan, the founder of the Mongol world empire, swept westward from Mongolia with an army gathered from all the Mongol *uluses* (hordes). Batu Khan's trans-*ulus* army had been given the task of fulfilling Chingis Khan's

mandate...to conquer the divided lands of the quarreling Rus' (proto-Russian) princes, the lands of the Turkic Bulgars and Kipchaks and the Christian lands of Eastern Europe. As the highly disciplined and mobile nomadic Mongol force swept across the Eurasian plains absorbing the shattered Kipchak tribes into its ranks, it broke through the narrow entrance to the Crimean Peninsula and gained control over many areas previously dominated by the sedentary peoples of the south, including Solkhat.

With the subsequent establishment of the state of the Mongol Golden Horde on the lower Volga River, Solkhat became the seat of power for Mongol local governors of the Crimean province and became known in Mongol as the Kırım...the Fortress.[3] From their bastion in Kırım, the increasingly independent Crimean governor-regents (known in Arabic sources as *Hakims* or *Emirs* of the Left Wing) exerted control over the wandering Turkic-Mongol tribes of the steppe lands to their north. The Turkic-Mongol nomads came to call the peninsula simply Kırım after this seat of local power, a name which has come to us in English in a corrupted from as the Crimea.

While the Mongols and the masses of their Kipchak subjects were originally shamanistic, in the early 1300s the ruler of the Golden Horde, Khan Uzbek (1313-1341), made a momentous decision to lead the aristocracy of this powerful East European state in converting to Sunni Islam. This decision was to have far reaching implications for Eurasian history. By choosing the religion of the Prophet Mohammed over that of the Eastern Orthodox Church, Uzbek Khan in effect prevented the Western Turco-Mongols from assimilating with the mass of their sedentary, Christian-Russian subjects (as their far flung Mongol kin had done with the sedentary populations in Il-Khanate Persia, Chagatai Central Asia and Yuan China). The thin patina of the Mongol elite, which was always far outnumbered by the more numerous Kipchak-Turkic nomadic subjects, instead began to intermarry with this Turkic element (whose nomadic lifestyle more closely resembled their own) and became linguistically Turkified rather than undergoing Russification and Christianization.

The amalgam of Islam, Mongol ruling institutions and the predominant Turkic Kipchak blood led to the creation of a new ethnonym for the ancient Turkic tribes of the Western steppes: 'Tatar'.

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[3] H.A.R. Gibb. *The Travels of Ibn Battuta.* vol. 2. Cambridge; Cambridge Univ. Press. 1962. p. 471.

The tribal name Tatar had originally been limited to one of the Mongolian clans forcefully incorporated into Chingis Khan's empire but it was soon applied to all Turkified Mongols by their Christian neighbors. To many Christians, the terrifying Mongol conquerors did in fact seem to be the 'devil's horsemen' or denizens of *Tartarus* (Latin, 'hell') and the term 'Tartar' was also used in Western sources. While the Tatar designation may have initially been applied to the Turkified Mongols by their neighbors, over time it became internalized by these Muslim inhabitants of the crumbling Golden Horde. The Tatar ethnonym became, over the centuries, both a religious and ethnic form of identification for the Muslim Tatar tribes of Siberia, the Volga basin and the Western steppes.

The new Muslim identity of the rulers of the Tatar Golden Horde was proclaimed in a concrete fashion for the first time in the Crimea at the administrative center of Kırım, which became known in Kipchak Turkish as Eski Kırım (Old Fortress) as time passed.[4] In the year 1314, Khan Uzbek had a stone mosque and *medrese* (school of Islamic learning) built in the city and the sound of the *muezzin* (Muslim prayer crier) drifted across the mountains and plains of the Crimea announcing that this land was henceforth a part of the *Dar al-Islam* (Arabic, the 'Realm of Islam'). Culturally, the Tatars of the Crimean province of the Golden Horde would come to have closer ties to the traditional lands of the Prophet Mohammed than with those of their Slavic neighbors in the woodlands to the north of the great Eurasian plain.

As the territory of the Russian princes slipped away from the grasp of the weakening Golden Horde in the following century, these Christian lands, like all lands of the unbeliever, were considered to be beyond the pale of the Islamic world and came to be known as the *Dar al-Harb* ('Realm of War') by the Tatar Muslims. From this time forward, the Kırım Peninsula would be a bastion of Tatar-Muslim power in Eastern Europe and the cradle for a new people formed from the Kipchak tribes of the Eurasian plains.

Today, the traveler to Eski Kırım (which is now known as Stary Krym in Russian) is hard put to find the ancient mosque of Uzbek Khan which is located on a back alley and relegated to a state of crumbling neglect. The city's predominately Russian population

[4] The Golden Horde was known to its contemporaries as the Kipchak Khanate. In later periods historians use the term Great Horde to refer to this state.

has little interest in the relics of a distant past which remind them of a time when Islamized Tatar-Mongols dominated their homeland. The Crimean Tatars, who are streaming back to their homeland after a half century of forced exile during the Soviet period, however, recognize the mosque of Uzbek Khan for what it represents. It was from this place that they symbolically gained the geographic base to their ethnonym, *Kırımlı* (Crimean), and their ethno-religious identity as Muslim-Tatars. The Crimean Tatars have recently rebuilt the minaret on the front of this historic mosque and Islam is, after 70 years of atheist suppression, beginning to once again form a component of Crimean Tatar identity.[5]

For much of their history Islam was not, however, merely a facet of Crimean Tatars' identity, it was *the* primary basis for most of their law, culture and traditions. The Tatar language of the Crimea similarly borrowed from the Arabic of the text of the Holy Qu'ran and Arabic and Persian names became widespread among the Crimea's Muslim population. The Tatar lower nobility were honored with the Persian title *mirza*, the wealthy made the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, and all faithful Muslims prayed to the holy sites of Arabia. The steppe traditions of the Mongol nomad rulers based on the informal *Yasa* or *Yasak* ('Law Code') attributed by some to Chingis Khan (who was himself a worshiper of Tengri, the god of the blue sky) gradually began to be replaced by Muslim laws and codes.

By the 16th century, Crimean Tatar Muslims had come to have more in common with Muslims of Anatolia than with shamanistic Tatars living in the depths of Siberia. Both the Anatolian Turks and the Tatars felt themselves to be members of the wider *umma*, the ecumenical community of Muslim believers.

Visitors to the court of the Khans of the Golden Horde at Saray (Persian, 'Palace') found themselves in the presence of one of the paramount Muslim rulers of the 14th century. The Khans of the Golden Horde ruled over a vast domain that extended from the Dobruca region (located on the southern banks of the Danube estuary in modern Romania) to the shores of the Aral Sea in Central Asia. The Islamized tribes that made up the armies of the Golden Horde nomadized over this vast prairie-land and indirectly ruled neighbo-

[5] At the time of the author's visit the Uzbek Mosque appeared to be undergoing repair. A new stone wall was being built around the mosque and the new minaret gleamed white in comparison to the main structure. The *medrese* behind the mosque was, by contrast, in ruins.

ring peoples, such as the Russians, and tribes of the northern Caucasus, such as the Circassians.

The plains of Eastern Europe were the domain of the nomad and Western merchants, such as the *messieurs* Polo, who traversed this 'sea of grass' encountered a truly alien way of life. The nomads of the Golden Horde lived in portable felt tents known as *yurts*, traversed the grasslands in great migrations with their herds and spent much of their lives on their rugged steppe ponies. These hardy nomads, who were trained in the art of cavalry warfare from a young age, despised weak agriculturists who were tied to the soil while cherishing their own freedom of movement. A 13th century Western visitor to the lands of the Tatars wrote of this nomadic people "when I came among them I felt as if I were entering some other world."[6]

The Ancient Peoples of the Southern Crimea

The northern two thirds of the Crimean Peninsula is an extension of the Eurasian steppe and the ruling Mongol elite (which became Turkified Tatars in a generation or two after blending with the local Turkic Kipchak element) easily adapted to this zone which supported their herds and nomadic way of life. As the Crimean plain extends southward, however, it encounters the foothills and mountains of the southern Crimea and this area was less hospitable to the Tatar-Mongols' pastoral way of life. To the Tatar horsemen, who cherished the wide open spaces of the steppe, the valleys and rugged crags of the south Crimean mountain chain presented a foreboding obstacle.

As in the neighboring Caucasus Mountains, the pre-Mongol inhabitants of this highland region wisely avoided open combat with the powerful Tatar riders and instead chose to defend themselves from ramparts of impregnable mountain fortresses. During the early Tatar period, the mountainous zone of the Crimea continued to play its age-old role as a sanctuary for tribes and ethnic groups fleeing the waves of more powerful nomadic groups who migrated to this region from the east. The Crimean mountain chain's role in Cri-

[6] Peter Jackson. *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck.* London; Hakluyt Society. 1990. p. 71.

mean history can thus be compared to that of the nearby Caucasus range which has been described as a 'preserve of nations.' Myriad ancient tribes and ethnic groups have sought refuge in the Caucasus chain's inaccessible valleys and highland fastness and, in some areas of the Caucasus, every valley is inhabited by a different ancient ethno-linguistic group.

For much of its history this situation prevailed in the Crimea as well. The thirteenth century traveler to the Crimea, Friar William of Rubruck wrote of this multi-ethnic preserve "There are lofty promontories along the sea coast from Kherson (Western Crimea) as far as the mouth of the Tanais (Sea of Azov), and between Kherson and Soldaia (Sudak) lie the Forty Settlements, of which nearly every one has its own dialect: the population includes many Goths, whose language is Germanic."[7]

As becomes evident from the eyewitness accounts of Rubruck and others the Tatars were certainly not the first nomadic people to force weaker tribes into the Crimean and Caucasus ranges in search of refuge. From the dawn of recorded history, the plains of the northern Black Sea were dominated by nomads who mounted hardy steppe ponies, mastered the deadly art of mounted archery and fought one another for control over the rich pasture lands of the Black Sea steppe. The losers in these largely unrecorded struggles were either absorbed by the victors or scattered into mountain ranges of the south.

The first such mounted tribal alliance to control the plains of the Black Sea were a people known in Greek sources as the Scythians. This Indo-European people first entered history as warriors and traders who both fought with, and engaged in commerce with the neighboring Greek colonists who had, by the 9th century B.C., become ensconced on the Crimean Peninsula's southern coast. Today all that remains of the once mighty Scythian people are their *kurgans* (burial mounds) which dot the monotonous plains of Eurasia from present-day Kazakhstan to the Dobruca region in Romania. Like many steppe alliances to come, the Scythians were defeated by a more powerful nomadic group pushing westward in search of grazing lands, the Sarmatians. The Indo-European Sarmatians were in turn conquered by the Germanic Goths who were themselves routed by the

[7] Ibid. p. 69. While this source may have been referring to the mountain fortress known in Tatar as Kirk Yer (Forty Places), his description of the linguistic diversity of this region was certainly intentional.

seemingly invincible Huns, who many consider to have been a vanguard of a new ethno-linguistic group that was to displace the older Indo-European ethnic groups on the Eurasian steppe. The Huns were, according to most theories, a predominately Turkic people and, from the time of their greatest military leader, Attila (first half of 5th century), until the 19th century, Turkic nomads were to dominate the broad swaths of the Eurasian plain.[8]

As was so often the case in the sanguinary struggles for the plains on the edge of Europe, the Huns propelled the defeated Gothic tribes westward where they poured over the weakened defenses of the Roman Empire and destroyed Roman power in the west. A detached remnant of the Ostrogoths (Eastern Goths), however, migrated southward into the mountains of the Crimea where they intermingled with the remnants of earlier Scythian and Sarmatian tribes (most notably the Sarmatian tribe known as the Alans) who settled in this region at an earlier date after being forced off the steppe.[9] From their mountain strongholds, such as Mangup in the southwestern Crimea, the Crimean Goths went on to dominate the southern Crimea (a land known in contemporary Western sources as *Gothia Maritime*') for a millennium.

While the masters of the Crimean plains to the north changed at a bewildering rate the Gothic presence in the Crimean mountains to the south remained constant.[10] It was only when the Turkic Kipchaks gained control of the Black Sea plains in the mid-1000s that the situation on the Western steppe, henceforth known as the Desht-i Kipchak (Kipchak Steppe), and north Crimean plains reached the degree of stabilization known in the Gothic mountains of the south. The Crimea was thus divided between the Turkic Kipchak nomads of the northern plain and the ancient population of the southern mountains who represented the Goths and earlier Indo-European groups from the steppe.

[8] J. Otto Maenchen-Helfen. *The World of the Huns*. Berkeley; Univ. of California Press. 1973. p. 441.

[9] T.N. Vysotskaia. *Pozdnie Skify v Iugo-Zapadnom Krymu*. Kiev; Naukova Dumka. 1972. pp. 187-188. On the Alans see. Agusti Alemany. *Sources on the Alans. A Critical Compilation*. London; Handbook of Oriental Studies. 2000.

[10] The Huns were followed by other Turkic confederations such as the Gök Turks, Khazars, Black Bulgars, Pechenegs, and finally the Kipchaks. Bruce Boswell "The Kipchak Turks." *Slavonic Review*. VI (1927).

The Peoples of the South Crimean Coast, the Greeks, Italians, and Armenians

As powerful as the new masters of the Crimean plains were, the Turkic Kipchaks exerted very little cultural influence on the mountain Goths who were more profoundly affected by events on the Crimea's southern coast. The dominant influence in this region was exerted by the Greeks who had maintained a presence on this warm southern littoral, known to the Greeks as the *'Climata'* since the time of Homer. Seafaring Greeks appeared as colonists on the northern shores of the *Pontus* (Greek 'Black Sea') including the south shore of the Crimea during the 7th century B.C.[11] Over the centuries the Greek settlers exerted a tremendous social and cultural influence on their 'barbarian' highland neighbors such as the Taurii and Cimmerarians (of whom we know very little), the Scythians, Sarmatians and finally the Goths.

The culture of the coastal Greeks had a distinctly Mediterranean flavor and events on this protected shore were often closely linked to happenings in Italy, Greece or Anatolia during the Roman and subsequent Byzantine periods. The Greek cities of the Crimean Peninsula (which was known as the *Tauride* Peninsula to the Greeks) played a considerable role in the affairs of the Greco-Byzantine Empire and their fates were often tied to events in the Byzantine capital, Constantinople. Travelers coming from the Pontic steppe to the mountains of the southern, Byzantine-dominated coast of the Crimea entered a land that was distinct from the Crimean hinterland. Dimitri Obolensky has pointed out that:

> One of the most clearly defined boundaries of the Byzantine Empire before the thirteenth century was the mountain range of the southern Crimea, which separated the narrow coastline, settled from antiquity by Mediterranean colonists, from the semi-arid pasture lands of the central and northern parts of the peninsula, inhabited by nomadic tribes from the Eurasian steppe.[12]

From the 6th century onward, the Orthodox Christianity of the

[11] Elisaveta Todorova. "The Greeks in the Black Sea Trade During the Late Medieval Period." *Etudes Balkaniques*. no. 3-4. 1992. p. 45. and Mihnea Gerindei and Gilles Veinstein. "La Tana-Azaq de la Presence Italienne a l'Empirse Ottomane." *Turcica*. vol. 8, no. 2. 1976.

[12] Dimitri Obolensky. *Byzantium and the Slavs*. New York; St. Vladimir's Press. 1994. p. 304.

Byzantine Greek rulers of the southern coast and the Greek language, which was so interwoven in the Eastern Orthodox rituals, began to spread among the Goths of the neighboring mountains. Many Grecified, Orthodox Goths in fact found themselves under Byzantine control as the expansionist Byzantine emperor Justinian (527-565) and his successors, built coastal fortresses in such towns as Alushton (contemporary Alushta), Gorzuvita (Gurzuf), Bosphoro (Kerch) and Kherson, to protect this region from raids by the Turkic nomads and the increasing threat of plundering bands of Slavic Russians.

In the 10th century, the pagan Russians established a principality at the foot of the Caucasus on the Taman Peninsula (the Taman Peninsula is separated from the eastern Crimea by the narrow straits of Kerch). From this principality, known as Tmutarkhan, the Russians exerted considerable influence over the eastern Crimea (the Kerch peninsula) for over a century.[13]

While it is debatable whether the Slavs strongly altered the cultural or ethnic makeup of the Crimea during this period, the impact of the Greek element on the character of the Crimean population is incontestable. During this period, the southern coast of the Crimea was settled heavily by Greeks from Anatolia seeking religious and political freedom.[14] While it would be misleading to include the Crimea in a tenth century map of the Kievan Rus state, the Crimean littoral was considered an integral part of the Byzantine Greek world for much of the early Medieval period. Cities such as Kherson were directly administered from Constantinople as *themes* (provinces).[15] Byzantine-Greek influence on the Crimea's southern littoral in fact appeared to be unshakable for half a millennium as Constantinople's frontier soldiers held the limes against a succession of heathen neighbors to the north. For much of its history then, the Crimea was divided between the Kipchak nomads of the steppes,

[13] The influence was not one-sided, however, and, during one of their raids on the Byzantine city of Kherson in the year 988, the leader of a Russian army, Vladimir Grand Prince of Kiev, converted to the Orthodox Christianity of the Byzantine Greeks. The Crimean Peninsula has, since this time, had great historical significance for the Orthodox Russians who followed their ruler's lead in converting to the Eastern rite. George Vernadsky. *Kievan Russia.* New Haven; Yale Univ. Press. 1948. p. 37.

[14] I. A. Baranov. "O Vosstanii Ioanna Gotskogo." *Feodal'naia Tavrika.* ed. S. N. Bibikov. Kiev; Naukova Dumka. 1974. p. 153. Greek settlement in the Crimea was particularly pronounced during the revolutions associated with the Iconoclast period.

[15] Obolensky. op. cit. no. 12. p. 26.

the Goths of the southern mountains and the Greco-Byzantines of the southern coast.

The death knell for Byzantine political influence on the Crimea's southern coast was not sounded by the restless Turkic Kipchak tribes of the Pontic interior, however, but by fellow Christians from the lands of the Catholic West. In 1204 Western Crusaders on their way to fight the infidels in the Holy Land, diverted their efforts to the more profitable task of sacking the capital of the Eastern Orthodox 'heretics', Constantinople. With the subsequent collapse of Byzantine authority in the Crimean south, Western merchants from the Republic of Venice and Commune of Genoa began to compete for control of the lucrative trading depots on the peninsula's southern shore.[16] Allying themselves variously with both the Western Latin rulers of Constantinople and the Byzantine emperors of Nicaea who sought to regain control of the imperial city, the Italian trading empires gradually gained control of Byzantium's wealthy entrepots on the shores of the Crimea.[17]

From walled fortress cities, such as the Venetian port of Sudak, and the Genoese ports of Kaffa, Lupico (modern Alupka) and Cembalo (Balaklava), the feuding Italians ruled over the Crimea's Greek coastal population and maintained prosperous trading relations with the tribes of the Black Sea hinterland.[18] For over two hundred years the Genoese and their weaker Venetian rivals maintained a precarious hold over two of the world's first colonial empires and both fought and traded with the neighboring Orthodox Goths of the mountains and nomadic Kipchaks of the Crimea's interior plains.[19] The Italians' hold on the protected southern coast was not initially threatened when the Mongols gained ascendancy over the Kipchaks of the northern plains and established themselves in Solkhat-Eski Kırım. The impressive walls of Sudak and Kaffa kept the Kipchak-

[16] As part of their reward for transporting the crusaders on their vessels the Venetians and Genoese were given trading privileges in Constantinople and the Black Sea by the Latin conquerors of Byzantium. Elie de La Primaudie. *Etudes sur le Commerce au Moyen Age. Histoire du Commerce de la Mer Noire et Colonies Genoises de la Krimee.* Paris; Comptoir des Imprineurs-Unis. 1848. pp. 5-9.

[17] *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia.* Moscow; Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatel'stvo. vol. 35. 1937. p. 306.

[18] V. V. Badian. "Torgovlia Kaffy v XII-XV vv." *Feodalnaia Tavrika.* ed. S.N. Bibikov. Kiev; Naukova Dumka. 1973. pp. 174-189.

[19] John Meyendorf. *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia.* Cambridge; Cambridge University Press. 1981. p. 49.

Tatar nomads at bay and enabled the Genoese to take advantage of new trade opportunities that came with the establishment of a *Pax Mongolica* over the Eurasian plain.[20]

Despite the occasional instance of warfare with the neighboring Kipchak-Tatar nomads, for over two hundred years the Crimean Italians maintained their rule over a polyglot population of Greek farmers, Greco-Gothic mountain shepherds and an increasingly large Armenian population. With the collapse of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia in south eastern Anatolia in 1375 under the assaults of the Mamluks, Armenian migrants began to arrive on the shores of the Crimean Peninsula seeking refuge. Others came during the Jelali Rebellions which shook Ottoman Anatolia in the late 16th and early 17th centuries making the Armenians the second largest population in the Crimea according to V. Mikaelian.[21] By the 1400s two thirds of the great Genoese emporium of Kaffa, for example, was Armenian and the Crimean Peninsula was known in various sources from the period as 'Armenia Maritime' or 'Armenia Magna.'[22] Armenian settlers in the Crimea built monasteries, tilled the soil and prospered under Italian rule and, in this process, joined the Greeks and Italians in becoming an important ethnic component of the south Crimean shore.

The Rise of the Tatar-Ottoman Alliance

The *modus vivendi* between the ruling coastal Italians and the Kipchak-Tatars, who gradually gained ascendancy in the neighboring mountain regions, began to come apart in the early 15th century. By the 1420s the Golden Horde, which ruled the lands to the north of the Italian coast, had lost its cohesion as the great Tatar clans fought for dominance and periphery regions, such as the Crimean Peninsula, began to break away from Saray's central control. In subsequent years independent Tatar states, ruled by khans who

[20] Thomas Noonan. "Suzdalia's Eastern Trade in the Century Before the Mongol Conquest." *Turcica.* vol. 19, 1978. pp. 269-297.

[21] V.A. Mikaelian. *Na Krymskom Zemle. Istoriia Armianskikh Poselenii v Krymy.* Erevan; Izdatel'stvo Aiastan. 1974. pp. 16-17. Berthold Spuler. "Kirim." *Encyclopaedia of Islam.* IV. New Ed. ed. by Bernard Lewis et. al. Leiden; EJ Brill. 1978. p. 136.

[22] A. Iakobson. *Krym v Srednie Veka.* Moscow; Izdatelstvo Nauka. 1973. p. 112. Marian Malowist. *Kaffa Wdugiej Polowie XV-ego Wiky.* Warsaw; 1935. p. 40.

claimed direct royal descent from Chingis Khan, appeared in the Crimean Peninsula (1443), on the lower Volga (centered on the city of Astrakhan) and on the upper Volga (based on the city of Kazan). A large nomadic state known as the Nogai Tatar Horde also appeared to the east of the Volga River with its capital centered on the city of Sarychik on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

The Chingisid ruler of the newly independent Crimean Khanate, Khan Haci Giray, sought to gain control of the wealthy coastal settlements of the neighboring Genoese to strengthen the new state's position *vis-à-vis* the other Tatar states.[23] Haci Giray Khan sought, in particular, to use the wealth of Kaffa to lure powerful nomadic tribes from the steppes north-east of the Crimea to his state (these Tatar nomads were known by the 15th century as Nogais). For the Crimean Tatars, the walls of Italian Kaffa and Sudak, however, presented an insurmountable obstacle for the Tatar nomads lacked the siege technology to breach the Italians' formidable defenses.

As the Italians tenaciously held on to their coastal colonies, they attempted to play one Crimean Tatar political party against another during the frequent civil wars among this people. During one such internal conflict following the untimely death of Khan Haci Giray, one party headed by the *bey* of the powerful Tatar clan known as the Shirins requested the assistance of the Ottoman Empire (which was at that time rapidly expanding in the Christian Balkans) against the meddlesome Genoese. The reigning Ottoman Sultan, Fetih Mehmed (Mohammed II 'the Conqueror') had shown the power of the Ottomans' newly established artillery corps in his conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and was eager to use his monstrous bombards against the dying remnants of Christian power in the Black Sea region.[24]

In 1475, the Ottoman *Sadrazam* (Grand Vezir) himself, Gedik Ahmet Pasha, sailed with a fleet of three hundred vessels to the Crimea to eradicate the last stubborn foothold of Italian colonial authority in the northern Black Sea and to intervene in the succession struggle between several of Khan Haci Giray's sons. After di-

[23] The rulers of the Great Horde sought to re-impose central rule over the Crimean Khanate for half a century. The invasions of the Khans of the Great Horde (including a particularly brutal series of invasions by Khan Ahmed in the 1470s) drove the Crimean Tatars into the Ottoman orbit in search of a protector.

[24] Mehmed II reigned from 1451-1481 with a brief and somewhat controversial reign in 1444 prior to the battle of Varna.

sembarking on the shores of the Crimea with Tatar assistance, Gedik Ahmet lost little time in attacking the Christian coastal strongholds. One after another the Italian cities' outdated defenses crumbled before the onslaught of the *Vezir's* powerful new cannons. The majority of the Genoese ruling class were then forcefully transferred to Istanbul (a process known in Ottoman sources as *'sürgün'*, i.e. 'deportation') but many fled to the lands of the Crimean Tatars.[25]

After conquering the Genoese strongholds of the coast and deporting the Italian ruling class, the Turkish invaders directly annexed the conquered lands on the southern shore (and other strategic sites on the Crimea's eastern coast, such as the fortresses of Yeni Kale and Kerch in the eastern Crimea) into the Ottoman Empire. The embryonic Khanate of the Crimean Giray dynasty thus found itself sharing the Crimea Peninsula with a powerful new neighbor, the Ottoman Empire, at an early date in its history.

Having dealt so successfully with the Christian Greco-Italians of the Crimea's southern shore, the Ottomans then moved against the Goths in the neighboring mountains. The Greco-Gothic dynasty that had long ruled from the walled mountain plateau city of Mangup in the south-western Crimea was not immune to the Sultan's cannons either and this last vestige of the ancient Ostrogoth people also fell to the powerful Ottoman invaders. Within a short time the green banner of Islam flew over the entire Crimea as the allied Tatars and Turks held sway over all three zones of the peninsula. An Ottoman scribe recorded the event writing "In the name of the Sultans the prayer of Islam was recited (in Mangup); so that the house of the infidel became the house of Islam."[26] For the first time in recorded history a sense of political unity prevailed over the disparate lands of the Crimean Peninsula as the allied Turkic Muslims spread their power over the northern plains, the mountains and the southern littoral.

[25] Mengli Giray was probably captured by the Ottomans in Kaffa where he seems to have spent considerable time. Halil Inalcik. *Sources and Studies on the Ottoman Black Sea. The Customs Register of Caffa, 1487-1490.* Cambridge Mass; Harvard University Press. 1996. p.150.

[26] Alexander Vasiliev. *The Goths in the Crimea.* Cambridge Mass. Medieavel Academy of America. 1936. p. 255.

The Tatarization of the Older Crimean Races

The parallel processes of Turkification and Islamization of the ethnically diverse Crimean peoples (which had begun centuries earlier) accelerated with the establishment of Turco-Tatar authority over this divided land and led to a gradual melding of many of the Crimea's ancient ethnic groups.[27] The process of Islamization of the disparate Crimean population, which took place largely in the 16th century, also brought a sense of cultural unity to the Crimean Peninsula. The Greeks, Armenians, Italians and newly arrived Ottoman Turks of the southern coast; Goths of the mountains; and Kipchak Tatars of the plains soon began the process of blending to form the Crimean Tatar ethnie.

As in the Ottoman Balkan provinces inhabited by Christian peoples, such as the Albanians, Bosnians, Serbs and Bulgarians, little pressure, however, was exerted on the Christian Armenian, Greek, Italian and Greco-Gothic populations of the Crimea to convert to Islam. Over the succeeding centuries, however, whole villages in the Crimean mountains and in the Ottoman coastal province did convert to Islam in a fashion that was reminiscent of the Islamization of many Balkan peoples such as the Albanians, Bosniaks and Pomaks.

In his demographic survey of the Ottoman coastal province directly annexed by the sultan between 1475 and 1478, known as the *Sancak* of Kefe (Turkish, 'Province of Kaffa'), Alan Fisher writes "As there is no indication of a policy of forced conversion, in fact, in the sixteenth century the Ottomans found conversion to Islam an inconvenience because Muslims paid fewer and lighter taxes than did non-Muslims, one can presume that economic and social pressures combined to make conversion attractive."[28] As to the Muslim Tatars' relations with the large Jewish, Greek, and Armenian populations that thrived in their midst right up until the Russian conquest, Henry Howorth claims in his classic work:

> There were many Jews in the Krim, who belonged to the Karait sect, and who originally came from Bukhara. They had several privileges not enjoyed by the Greeks and Armenians, which were obtained by them from a Jew doctor, who cured a sister of Haji Selim Giray Khan

[27] Istvan Vasary. "Orthodox Christian Qumans and Tatars of the Crimea in the 13th and 14th Centuries." *Central Asiatic Journal.* no. 32, 1988. pp. 260-271.

[28] Alan Fisher. "The Ottoman Crimea in the Sixteenth Century." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies.* vol. v, no. 2. June 1981. p.141.

> of some disease. The Tartars were very tolerant, and Christians of different denominations abounded in the Krim, the Armenians being the most numerous.[29]

For a variety of reasons then it is not surprising that Ottoman *defters* (bureaucratic records) point to an increase in the Muslim population of the Crimea in the century following the Ottomans' conquest of the southern coast. According to Giles Veinstein, the percentage of Muslims in the coastal *Sancak* of Kefe increased from 20 percent to 47 percent from the reign of Sultan Selim I (1512-1520) to that of his successor Sultan Suleiman (1520-1566).[30] The increase in the Muslim population of the coast, in part, reflected the movement of Muslims to the Ottoman Empire's new Crimean province from Anatolia, but it was also indicative of growing conversion to Islam by the indigenous Greek, Italian and Armenian populations of the Ottoman coastal province.[31] The number of Armenians who converted and became registered as "Sons of Abdullah" (Abdullah, signifying servant or convert of Allah) was especially marked at this time.[32]

This process was paralleled by the conversion of Greco-Goths of the nearby mountains who began to convert to Islam and become 'Tatars' when the Kipchak-Tatars began to settle in the south Crimean foothills. In his history of the Crimean Goths, Alexander Vasiliev writes "towards the end of the thirteenth century many peoples in the Crimea including the Goths had become Tatarized." This historian further states that, as early as the mid-thirteenth century "the Goths were so Tatarized that they could not be readily distinguished from the Tatars."[33] By the time of the Ottoman conquest of the Gothic mountain citadel of Mangup in 1475, many of the previously Orthodox mountain Goths had in effect already

[29] Henry Howorth. *History of the Mongols*. London. 1880. p. 609.

[30] Giles Veinstein. "From Italians to Ottomans: The Case of the Northern Black Sea Coast in the Sixteenth Century." *Mediterranean Historical Review*. vol. 1. no. 2. Dec. 1986. pp. 221-238.

[31] Ibrahim Kafesoğlu. *A History of the Seljuks*. ed. Gary Leiser. Carbondale; Southern Illinois Univ. Press. 1988. p. 73. The migration of Turks to the southern Crimea had actually begun during the Seljuk period when the Seljuks briefly ruled over the region around Sudak.

[32] Giles Veinstein. "La Population du sud de la Crimée au debut de la domination Ottomane." *Sources and Studies on the Ottoman Black Sea. The Customs Register of Caffa, 1487-1490*. vol. 1 ed. Halil Inalcik. Cambridge Mass; Harvard University Press. 1996. p. 150.

[33] Vasiliev. op. cit. no. 26. pp. 175-176.

changed their ethnicity by converting to Islam and joining the Tatar ethno-religious community. In this fashion the last traces of the Goths disappeared from history and went into the making of a distinctly *Crimean* version of the Tatar people.

The Rediscovery of the Pre-Mongol Origins of the Crimean Tatars

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, German historians and nationalists (among them Adolf Hitler) began to uncover the lost history of their Germanic-Gothic ancestors in the Crimean Peninsula and there was much speculation concerning the fate of this 'lost Aryan tribe.' There is of course no mystery concerning the fate of this eastern branch of the great medieval Gothic migrations.[34] Nineteenth century Russian and German visitors to the Tatar villages in the shadow of the Gothic fortress at Mangup Kale (Tatar, 'Mangup Castle'), found their descendants among the Tatars living there.[35]

A 19th century Russian visitor to the Gothic region in the southwestern mountains was convinced that "In all probability their (the Goths') descendants are the Tatars of a series of villages in the Crimea who are sharply delineated from the inhabitants of neighboring villages by their tall height and other features characteristic of the Scandinavians."[36] More recent works, such as Michel Kazanski's history of the Goths point out that "In all probability the remnants of the Crimean Goths remain in the 'Turkic' base of the Tatar population."[37] Seen in this light, it is not surprising that the contemporary Crimean Tatars describe themselves as the descendants of "the Circassians, Goths, ancient Greeks, Italians and Armenians" and do not identify with the 13th century Mongol invaders.[38]

There seems to be little doubt that the mountain Goths did in fact

[34] Strictly speaking the Goths and Germans were not of course Aryan they were Teutonic. The Indo-European Scythians and Sarmatians were genuine Aryans.

[35] V.E. Vozgrin. *Istoricheskie Sud'by Krymskikh Tatar*. Moscow; Misl. 1992. p.93. Vozgrin was subsequently expelled from the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Academy of Science for what was seen as the pro-Tatar stance in his work. He also became the only Russian member of the Crimean Tatars' *Mejlis* (Parliament).

[36] Ibid. p.94.

[37] Michel Kazinski. *Les Goths Ier-VIIe Apres J.-C.* Paris; Editions Erance. 1991. p. 124.

[38] Etham Feyzi Gözaydin. *Kırım. Kırım Türklerinin Yerleşme ve Göçmeleri*. Istanbul; Vakit Matbaasi. 1948. p. 30.

convert to Islam and become Tatarized, although they were only gradually accepted by the earlier Kipchak-Tatar Muslims of the northern plains as fellow Muslims. Hans Schiltberger, a Bavarian who visited this region in 1396, claimed that the nomadic Kipchak-Tatars of the northern plains used the derisive term 'Tat' (Thatt) to describe their recently Islamized Gothic neighbors inhabiting the southern mountains.[39] According to Professor P. Brunn, the term Tat signified a religious "renegade" or "a conquered race" in the local Turkic dialect and "the Crimean Tatars applied the contemptuous term of Tadd to the Tatars of the south coast because they did not consider them of pure descent, in consequence of the intercourse of their ancestors with the Greeks and Genoese."[40] This term has the same root as the pejorative ethnonym 'Tat' used by the Turkic peoples of the Caucasus, such as the Karachays, Kumyks and Balkars, to describe earlier non-Turkic mountain populations, such as the Jewish Mountain Tats.

In his analysis of the Crimean Tats' ancestry, Edmond Schutz writes "The anthropological differences between the Tatars and Tats is conspicuous. The Tatars are usually round faced, short and dark, among the Tats prevail two types: the most characteristic feature of many of them is their high stature, fair hair and blue eyes."[41] Concerning the Tats' anthropological characteristics, this source writes:

> The facts behind their specific anthropological character which sharply distinguishes them from the Tatar people should be looked for in their earlier history in the Crimea. In light of the historical and geographic findings described so far, the Baidar and Içel Tats (Tats from two valleys in the south-west Crimea) may be classified as an ethnical mixture of the ancient Gothic and Alan population who adopted the language of the ruling class of the local Tatar tribe. This conclusion would solve the problem of the Nordic and Iranian traits of the Tats.[42]

The Soviet anthropologist, B. Kuftin mentions that, with the Turkification and Islamization of the "Greek-aborigines", "Greco-Goths" and "a portion of the Armenians", the cultural and linguistic differences between these people and the Tatars decreased.[43] In the process, these ancient peoples began to adopt the language, religion and customs of the dominant Kipchak Tatars. The subsequent amalgamation of the ancient mountain and coastal populations with the Kipchak-Tatars of the plains led to the formation of a uniquely Crimean version of the 'Tatar' ethnic group. The mixed 'Tatars' who came into being on the Crimean Peninsula differed in many ways from the Tatar populations of the Khanates of Kazan, and Astrakhan and the 'pure' Tatar nomads of the steppes of the Desht-i Kipchak, known as Nogais.

[39] J. Buchan Tefler. *The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger.* London; Hakluyt Society. 1879. pp. 50 and 176.
[40] Ibid. p. 176.
[41] Edmond Schutz. "The Tat People in the Crimea." *Acta Orientalia, Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.* vol. 31. 1977. p. 96.
[42] Ibid. p. 97.
[43] B. Kuftin. "Iuzhnoberezhnye Tatary Kryma." *Zabveniiu ne Podlezhit.* Kazan; Tatarskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo. 1992. p. 241. P. Keppen. "O Drevnnostiiakh Iuzhnogo Berega Kryma i Gor Tavrichecheskikh." *Krymskii Sbornik.* Kiev; 1837. p. 135.

Just as the Bosniaks and Pomaks (Slavic Muslims ethnic groups with Serbo-Croatian or Bulgarian origins) were forged in the Balkans when the indigenous Slavs converted to Islam during four centuries of Ottoman rule in Eastern Europe (a process known among the Balkan Christians as 'turning Turk'), a new ethnie was formed on the soil of the Crimea when the older Greek, Gothic, Armenian and Italian Christian populations converted to Islam and 'turned Tatar.'[44]

One must not, however, make the mistake of seeing the Tatars subsequently formed in the Crimean Peninsula as a homogenous ethnic group despite the conversions to Islam among the Tat-Tatars. The sub-ethnic differences in lifestyle, history, dialect, physiognomy, and economic activity between the 'Tatars' of the coastal mountains on the one hand and those of the northern plains remained right up until the 20th century. With their light-skinned, Europeoid features and an economy based on mountain terrace farming and vertical transhumant sheep herding, the mountain Tat-Tatars' way of life differed markedly from that of the nomadic Kipchak-Tatar cattle herders who roamed the open plains of the northern steppe lands of the Crimea and southern Ukraine.

The Kipchak Tatars of the north Crimean plains and steppes of the southern Ukraine can in fact be delineated as a separate subethnie from the Tat Tatars to the south. The differences between these two Tatar peoples of the Crimea were increased following the arrival of thousands of Kipchak Tatar nomads from the Nogai Horde

[44] Vatro Murvar. *Nation and Religion in Central Europe and the Western Balkans-The Muslims in Bosnia, Hercegovina and Sandzak: A Sociological Analysis.* Brookfield Wisconsin; University of Wisconsin Press. 1989. p. 12.

in the 15th and 16th centuries. Waves of Nogai Tatars fled the Nogai Horde (located to the north-east of the Crimea) and poured into the north Crimean plain as the Russians began to expand into their grazing grounds.

The nomadic Kipchak speaking Nogai Tatars appear to have adapted their ethnonym from Emir Nogai, a powerful Tatar commander who played the role of throne-maker in the Golden Horde from 1280-1299. The name Nogai (Mongol, 'dog') refers to a Mongol totem and the Nogai were Kipchakized Mongols from the great Mongol Mangit clan. Roaming in two vast hordes that could field armies of up to 200,000 riders, the Nogai Tatars dominated the Kipchak steppes from the Yaik-Volga mesopotamia to the Danube Estuary for most of the 15th and 16th centuries.[45] The Nogai confederations were so powerful that they were able to defeat and kill the Crimean Khan, Mehemed Giray (1515-23) when his expansion beyond the Crimea was perceived as a threat to their independence.[46]

By the 17th century the Nogai hordes had, however, come under pressure from the Buddhist Dzungar Mongols (later known as Kalmyks) and encroaching Don and Zaporozhian Cossacks and continued the process of migrating to the Crimea seeking protection from the Crimean Khan and his powerful Ottoman suzerain. The Nogai Tatar nomads thus became a vital ethnic component in the Crimea, but they tended to be looked down upon by the sedentary Tat-Tatars of the Crimea's south who borrowed their language from the Oghuz speaking Ottomans of the coast, not the Kipchak speaking Tatars of the north Crimean plain.

While the language of the coastal Tatars was, after the 1475 Ottoman conquest, Turkish derived from the Oghuz branch of the Turkic language, the language of the mountain Tats was strongly influenced by the Kipchak branch of Turkic spoken by the Nogai Tatar nomads of the northern Crimean steppe and was also likewise considered uncouth by the Tat Tatars living on the southern coast. In addition, the inhabitants of the Ottoman coastal *sancak*, which was centered on the provincial capital of Kefe (the Turkified

[45] Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay. "La Grande Horde Nogay et Le Problème des Communications Entre l'Empire Ottoman et l'Asie Centrale en 1552-1556." *Turcica.* vol. 8, no. 2. 1976. pp. 203-236.

[46] Peter Golden. *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples.* Weisbaden; Otto Harrowitz. 1992. pp. 324-328.

Kaffa), adopted the high Ottoman culture of Turkish Anatolia as waves of Turks settled in this region (especially during the Jelali rebellion which devastated Anatolia in the 17th century).

The Islamized shore inhabitants, who maintained many of their ancient Greek and Armenian traditions and agricultural practices gradually came to be known to the Mountain Tats and nomadic Nogais as Yaliboyu Tats (Coastal Tats), a term that distinguished them from the neighboring Tatar groups of the mountains and plains. Although the Yaliboyu Tatars (or Yaliboyu Tats) did contribute to the ethnic component of the developing Crimean Tatar people, they sustained the Italian, Armenian and Greek complexions of their ancient ancestors who had inhabited these shores since the dawn of history.

For much of their early history then, it was the diverse ethnic and geographic origins and loyalties that gave these inhabitants of the Crimean Peninsula their differing senses of group identity. There are grounds for believing, however, that the Crimeans of this period did have a vague identification with the Crimean Peninsula in a larger sense, identifying themselves with the Tatar term *Kırımlı* (Crimean). Furthermore, while some post-Soviet, Crimean Tatar historians have debated the historical validity of the 'Tatar' ethnonym of their ancestors (in part as a result of its negative Mongol connotations), the Christian population of the mountains and coasts had long referred to their nomadic Muslim neighbors to the north as 'Tatars.' When the Christian Armenians, Italians, and Greeks converted to Islam they left their Christian ethno-religious community and, by acknowledging Mohammed as the Prophet of God, adopted the ethnonym 'Tatar', i.e. Muslim. The Yaliboyu-Tats and Mountain-Tats of the south and Nogais of the north thus formed the foundation of a new people who gradually internalized a vague sense of *'Kırım Tatarlık'* ('Crimean Tatarness') in spite of their variegated ethno-linguistic backgrounds.

The Crimean Tatars can thus be seen as a heterogeneous ethnic group having its roots in the deepest Crimean antiquity and claiming descent from an array of earlier ethno-religious groups who occupied the diverse terrains of the peninsula since the time of the Scythians and Greeks. The process of breaking down the ancient sub-ethnic identities among the Crimean Tatars had not yet in fact been completed when the Crimean Tatars were torn from their homeland in 1944, but the foundation for a wider sense of Crimean

Tatar group identification had been laid by the 15th century with the conversion of this people to Islam. From this time forward it was the shared sense of belonging to the Islamic *umma* that gave the diverse Tatar population of the Crimean Khanate its sense of unity.

Soviet Nation Building and the 'Rooting' of the Crimean Tatars in the Pre-Mongol Period

Over the centuries, the Crimean Tatar sub-ethnic groups lost the communal memory of their distinct ancient forebears, such the Scythians, Sarmatians, Huns, Kipchaks, Goths, Italians, Armenians and Greeks, and came to identity themselves according to Tatar-Islamic cultural and religious traditions. It was only in the 18th and 19th centuries that Russian, French, English and German traveler-historians began to uncover the Crimean Tatars' long-forgotten roots in the Crimea's murky past. During the early Soviet period this previously *ad hoc* research was continued with greater sophistication by an army of trained archeologists, anthropologists, historians and linguists who sought to provide all Soviet nations with a secular-Marxist 'national' history.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet regime supported anthropological and historical research throughout the newly established state as part of an overall program of scientific exploration that went hand in hand with the modernization and Sovietization of the USSR's ethnic republics. This was a part of the statewide program known as *korenizatsiia*, literally the 'rooting' of Soviet nations in their homeland-Soviet republics. During this period, a whole generation of Crimean Tatars grew up under a system that stressed the supremacy of science and history over religion, which was henceforth proclaimed the 'opiate of the masses.' For two decades Soviet researchers throughout the USSR produced a vast array of invaluable historical works that were remarkably free of the propaganda and Marxist pseudo-science found in works from the later Stalinist, Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods. During this era, Crimean Tatar children and university students attended socialist history classes in modern state schools and began to reclaim chapters from their forgotten pre-Islamic past.

While the Crimean Tatars of the USSR had a vague collective memory of having once possessed a great state during the period of

the Crimean Khanate (1443-1783), modern archeological research during the 1920s uncovered older Crimean civilizations that were proclaimed as the progenitors of the socialist Crimean Tatar ethnonation. Soviet archeologists not only brought these ancient civilizations to light, but their scientific research proved that the Crimean Tatars were the descendants of these mysterious older races whose previously-neglected ruins so profusely marked the Crimea's landscape.

During a 1930 expedition among the Crimean Tatar mountain villages in the Mangup area, for example, Soviet anthropologist A. N. Bernshtam analyzed the ancestral *eski evler* (ancient houses) inhabited by the Tatars of this mountainous region. This expedition revealed that the building techniques of the mountain Tatars' distinctive houses (with first floors made from local stones and wooden second floors fitted together without nails) could be traced back to the earliest inhabitants of the Crimea.[47] Of the 'native' Crimean Tatars' origins among the Goths, Scythians and Sarmatians, Soviet anthropologist, B. Kuftin wrote in the 1920s "All these myriad cultural influences left their trace in the present population of the Crimea. Bringing to its soil characteristics that were reshaped here in a unique mutual relationship with one another and, adapting to the local natural conditions and native forms of living, they long survived in other, superseding ethnic waves."[48]

In carrying out their much heralded "scientific-research expeditions for studying Tatar culture in the Crimea" Marxist historians in fact created a new perception among the Crimean Tatars of themselves, their origins, communal identity and links to their homeland.[49] Just as the Romanians could claim links to their homeland going back to time of their distant ancestors, the Dacians and Romans; the Albanians to the Illyrians; or the English to the Celts, Saxons and Vikings, the Crimean Tatars could now proudly proclaim that they had roots in the soil of the Crimea going back to their distant ancestors, the Scythians, Sarmatians, Greeks, Armenians, Italians, Kipchaks, and Goths. They had native 'roots' in the soil of their homeland that were planted long before the arrival of Islam or the

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[47] A.N. Bernsthtam. "O Dereviannikh Postroikakh Kryma." *Materialy Eski-Kermenskoi Ekspeditsii 1931-1933 gg.* ed. S.D. Dimitrov. Moscow. 1935. pp. 135-45.

[48] B. Kuftin. op. cit. no. 43. p. 240.

[49] I. Vorozdin. "Soveremenaia Krymskaia Respublika." *Novy Vostok.* no.19. p. 119.

13th century Mongol invaders. As such, the Crimean Tatars were to be recognized as the *korennoi narod* (rooted or native people) of a short lived Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic which existed from 1921 to 1945.

The 1944 Deportation and the Rewriting of Ancient Crimean Tatar History

With the brutal deportation of the Crimean Tatar nation in 1944 on charges of 'mass collaboration' with the Nazi invaders, the Soviet regime ended the bright period of exploration into Crimea's ancient history associated with the Crimean Tatars. The history of this punished 'non-people' and their ties to the Crimean Peninsula were increasingly rewritten by official historians more concerned with satisfying the censors and providing 'politically correct' versions of Crimean history than providing objective histories. It came as no surprise that the newly revised official histories of the Crimea refuted the Crimean Tatars' ancient ties to their former homeland. In the new order of things, the Crimean Tatars were known as 'Tatar-Mongol interlopers' and, according to new speculation (based on political exigency not anthropology or archeology), their homeland lay somewhere "in the depths of Asia."[50] Slavic Ukrainians and Russians who moved into the lands left by the deported Crimean Tatars in the 1940s and 1950s learned that the Crimean Peninsula had in fact been *Slavic* since antiquity not Tatar. One instance of this rewriting of the history of the Crimea has been described as follows:

> Before leaving the subject of falsification, we might mention the special case of ancient ties with the Crimea. Here the argument is that the history of the Crimea has been inseparably linked with the Slavs since the third century A.D. and that bourgeois historians have falsified the history of the area by considering it a non-Russian area that was later annexed by the tsars. At a three-day conference on the history of the Crimea, held in Simferopol in 1952, Grekov charged that 'the Crimea was the object of envy of many powers. The historians of these powers have falsified its history to suit their policies.' According to another paper read at the meeting, the basic population of the Crimea was Slavic from the sixth century. Since the Crimea is considered to be an integral part of Slavdom which was severed from the trunk by the Tatar invasions, its later incorporation in the Russian state is referred to not as annexation *(prisodeinenie)* but as reunion or reunification *(vossoedinenie)*.[51]

[50] A.I. Iakobson. op. cit. no. 22. p. 104

The imagery of the Crimea as a limb 'severed from the Slavic trunk' by the 'Tatar invasions' compares drastically with the earlier Soviet imagery which stressed the Crimean Tatars' ancient 'roots' *(koreny)* in the Crimean soil.[52]

During their long years of exile in the Central Asian following the 1944 deportation, the Crimean Tatars found it difficult to gain access to uncensored histories of the ancient Crimea written during the 1920s and 1930s. According to Crimean Tatar dissident leader and head of the post-Soviet Crimean Tatar *Mejlis* (Parliament) Mustafa Dzhemilev Kirimoglu, it was a craving for the truth about the Crimean Tatars' forbidden history that drove him and many other young Crimean Tatars living in exile to come together and begin to question Soviet authority and censorship. After much investigation in the libraries in their places of exile in Central Asia, Dzhemilev "traced the formation of their culture, their branching off from other tribes, that populated the Crimea and the steppe around the Black Sea" and shared his findings with other Tatar students who were thirsty for information on their nation's ancient history.[53] From these humble meetings where Crimean Tatar students in exile gathered to explore their people's diverse ethno-history, arose a vibrant network of dissidents who developed a sense of authority and history that went counter to the official Soviet party line.

[51] Lowell Tillet. *The Great Friendship. Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities*. Chapel Hill; University of North Carolina Press. 1969. pp. 290-291.

[52] A Soviet source from this period states that the Tatar-Mongols cut the Crimea (a land previously described as "indissolubly" linked to Kievan Russia) off from the Russian people who, it is inferred, were previously the dominant inhabitants of this region. *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*. Moscow; Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatel'stvo. 1953. No. 23. p. 552.

[53] Ludmilla Alexeyeva. "Mustafa Dzhemilev, His Character and Convictions." *Tatars of the Crimea. Return to the Homeland*. Durham; Duke University Press. 1998. pp. 210-211.

The Second Rediscovery: The Crimean Tatars' Ancient History in the Post-Soviet Context

Since their return to the Crimea from the Central Asian exile in the 1990s, Crimean Tatars of all walks of life have become interested in uncovering their people's hidden history. The newly established Crimean Tatar press in the Crimea cannot print enough articles dealing with the long forbidden chapters of Crimean history to satisfy its readership. It is not unusual to find Crimean Tatar pensioners discussing the latest newspaper article on Kipchak-Goth relations or to come across Tatar school children who can eloquently expound on the intricacies of their people's complex, pre-Mongol genealogy.

One fact becomes clear from Crimean Tatars' national fascination with the ancient history of their people. The Crimean Tatars of today, both in the Crimea and in the Central Asian diaspora, consider themselves to be the indigenous, autochtonous population of the Crimea and this perception has strongly shaped their *Weltanschauung* and views of their ancient rights to the Crimean land.

The Crimean Tatars are particularly assertive in stressing their ancient pre-Mongol roots in the Crimea. The contention that the Crimean Tatars have pre-Mongol indigenous roots in the Crimea is asserted over and over again by the Crimean Tatars and their supporters. The following claim made in a work entitled *The History of the Formation of the Crimean-Tatar Nation (Istoriia Formirovaniia Krymskotatarskoi Natsii)* is typical in this regard:

> Therefore, in turning to the Crimean landscape and its native people, we point out that the native ethnos of the Crimea, namely the ethnic expression of its original nature, appears in the Crimean Tatars, the Crimean Karaims and the Krymchaks (the latter two are small, Crimean Jewish groups)-autochons going back 2,500 years in antiquity.[54]

Using historical sources long forbidden to them, Crimean Tatar historians returning from the Central Asian diaspora are once again proclaiming that they are a people formed in the Crimea and, as such, they (and they alone!) are the true "ethnic expression" of its soil. After almost a half century of being told in official sources that they are "among the young ethnic groups of the peninsula" Crimean

[54] Ernst Kudusov. *Istoriia Formirovaniia Krymskotatarskoi Nattsii*. Simferopol; Kasavet. 1992. p. 5.

Tatar historians, such as Aydar Memetov, now proudly maintain "The Crimean Tatar people were historically formed from various peoples who settled in the Crimea from deep antiquity. The process of the formation of the Crimean Tatars, as with many other peoples, took place during the course of migration, settlement and also the conquest of one ethnic group by another."[55]

This interest in the pre-Tatar Khanate periods of Crimean history by the Crimean Tatars returning from exile has yielded some unexpected results. In an interesting twist of history, many Crimean Tatars today have begun to look critically at their history and to question the 'Tatar' component of their ethnonym, which is seen as a false Mongol-era appendage to their ancient Crimean appellation. A lively debate has begun in the Crimean Tatar repatriate settlements as to whether or not their nation should in fact simply be called 'Crimeans' *(Kırımlılar)*, an ethnonym that implicitly rejects their links to the steppe, their nomadic heritage, and, most importantly, the Mongols.

In an article entitled "I am a Crimean" *(Ya Krymskii)* Nuri Abdullaev, for example, recently claimed that many Crimean Tatars "have come to the conclusion that it is necessary to specify the name of our people and, more specifically, to presently disregard the second part of the name 'Kirim Tatar', leaving as our fundamental identification the name of our homeland."[56] Emil' Amit provides a historical basis for distancing the Crimean Tatars from the Tatar roots of their identity in his account:

> The present day Tatars are the descendants of earlier tribes who lived in these places before Batu Khan, they were conquered just as the Russians were...It was, however, in someone's interest not to take note of the differences between the Mongol conquerors and the tribes conquered by them, for whom subsequently the name, but not self-designation!, Tatar was attached.[57]

Another source claims "The ethnonym 'Crimean Tatars' was given to the Crimeans by their northern neighbors, essentially by the

[55] Alexander Tropkin. "Crimea. At the Crossroads." *Soviet Life*. April 1991, no. 4 (415). pp. 5-26. A. Memetov. "O Proiskhozhdenii Krymskikh Tatar i ikh Iazyka." *Kasavet. Sotsial'no-Literaturny Zhurnal*. Feb. 3 1994. p. 6.

[56] Nuri Abdullaev. "Ya Krymskii." *Avdet*. Sept. 17, 1997. pp. 2-3.

[57] Emil' Amit. "Nikto Ne Zabyt, Nichto ne Zabyto. Vospominaniia." *Tak eto Bylo. Natsional'nye Repressii v SSSR 1919-1952 Gody*. vol. 3. Moscow; Rossiiskii Mezhdunaraodny Fond Kultury. 1993. p. 81.

Russians for whom all Turks, without exception, were called Tatars."[58] While this account is correct in its contention that the ethnonym Tatar was given to the Tatars by their Christian neighbors, the implicit denial of links to the Tatar people of the Golden Horde and the steppe is perhaps an understandable reaction to Soviet attempts to deny the existence of a separate 'Crimean' Tatar identity for this people during the long post-1944 exile period.[59] As with other diasporic groups, the Crimean Tatar people have sought to root themselves historically in the land which was previously lost to them.[60]

The Crimean Tatar exile historian and elder spokesman, Memet Sevdiyar, points out that post-1944 Soviet historians attempted to "hide the real ethnogenesis of the Crimean Tatar people who formed over the course of thousands of years in the Crimea and who received the name Tatar during their subjugation by the Mongol-Tatar empire of the Golden Horde."[61] In a separate work devoted to the Crimean Tatars' origins this source describes Soviet propaganda attempts to erase his people's unique historical link to the pre-Mongol Crimean Peninsula. Sevdiyar writes:

> In the years of the Second World War, in the time when, to a man, whole nations were deported from the Caucasus and the Crimea and other comfortable places in the former Soviet Union and scattered to die, the question of the moral and historical justification of these acts by the authorities arose. It was necessary for science to prove that the territories freed up by the deported peoples at one time in history belonged to the Slavic tribes, the heirs of whom should be the Russian people. The scientists and writers of the Soviet Union were mobilized for the fulfillment of this thankless task. They were required to: ....Hammer into the people the idea that the Crimean Tatars took the Crimea from the Russians in the 13th century, that every act of the Golden Horde and Crimean Khans was wild and that the Crimean Tatars lived a parasitic existence as a wild bandit horde whose imperialistic campaigns destroyed their weak neighbors and that the seizure of their (the Crimean Tatars') territory by Russia represented the spreading of higher civilization.[62]

[58] Ernst Kudusov. op. cit. no. 54. p.11.

[59] For all official purposes during the post-deportation period the Crimean Tatars were officially subsumed into the larger Volga Tatar population living in the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

[60] Not surprisingly, the Crimean Tatar efforts to root their nation in the ancient history of the Crimea make use of the Soviet lexicon from the 1920s period of state sponsored rooting or *korenizatsiia* which first instilled in this people a link to their distant past.

[61] Memet Sevdiyar. "Fal'sifikatsiia Istorii." *Kirim.* Sept. 27, 1997. p.1.

After half a century of propaganda that portrayed the Crimean Tatars as nomadic, Mongol nomadic pillagers with no real links to a homeland or its soil, this reactionary 'rooting' in history by the returning Crimean Tatars is understandable, as is their desire to distance themselves from any ties with the Mongol invaders who conquered their Kipchak ancestors. The Crimean Tatar repatriates are fighting to both justify their unique historical claim to the Crimean Peninsula and, at the same time, to deconstruct the historical image of their people as 'Mongol barbarians.' The importance of this issue to the repatriated Crimean Tatars is seen by the fact that the issue of the true ethnonym of the Crimean Tatars was heatedly debated in the *Kurultay* (Crimean Tatar National Congress) of October 1999 with several Tatars arguing for the utilization of the term Kırımlı (Crimean) for their people rather than the term Crimean Tatar.

This tendency among some Crimean Tatars to refute or downplay the 'Tatar' aspect of their identity, however, belies the rich contributions to Crimean history and to the formation of Crimean Tatar people that can be traced to the influence of the steppe people known as the Tatars. The Crimean Khans (who claimed direct descent from Chingis Khan) and the great Tatar clans that dominated Crimean history for over 400 years (whose origin lay in the Mongol-dominated clans of the Golden Horde), made considerable economic, political and cultural contributions to the histories of the various sub-ethnic groups who formed the Crimean Tatars.

On a similar note, the effects of three hundred years of rich Ottoman influence in the southern Crimea are now being downplayed by the Crimean Tatars who do not wish to be portrayed (in the past or the present) as "lackeys" of Russia's traditional enemy, Turkey. The Crimean Tatars are of course correct in tracing their origins to the waves of ancient peoples who settled in the Crimea *prior* to the Mongol invasion, such as the Scythians, Greeks, Goths, Italians and Armenians. The contributions to the Crimean Tatars' history made by the Mongols, the later Kipchakized Tatars and the Ottoman Turks (who dominated the southern Crimea from the 15th to the 18th

[62] Memet Sevdiyar. *Etiudy ob Etnogeneze Krymskikh Tatar.* New York; Fond Krym. 1997. pp. 1-2.

century) must, however, be acknowledged in order to gain an accurate picture of the Crimean Tatars' history from the 1400s to the Russian conquest.

In order to understand the history of the Tatars in the three centuries following the establishment of the Crimean Khanate and Ottoman coastal province, the historian must look to the steppes to the north of the Crimea, to the plains of the Kipchak-Tatar nomads of the Golden Horde and to the south, across the waters of the Black Sea, to the capital of the Ottoman sultans, Istanbul. If an analysis of the first stage in the formation of the Crimean Tatar people began in the ruins of the ancient Mongol capital of Eski Kırım, on the fortress plateau of Gothic Mangup and in the coastal coves of the Greeks, Italians and Armenians, then the starting point for understanding the history of the Crimean Tatars for the next 300 years lies in Bahçesaray, the seat of power for the semi-independent Crimean Khanate, and Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

CHAPTER TWO

DAR AL ISLAM. THE CRIMEAN TATARS FROM MEHMED THE CONQUEROR TO CATHERINE THE GREAT

As with any diaspora group, an understanding of the diasporic Crimean Tatars' historic link to their homeland is a prerequisite for understanding the ways in which the experience of communal separation from this place has forged this people's modern identity. How, for instance, were the Crimean Tatars shaped and defined by the natural environment in their natal territory? How did this still-consolidating ethnic group conceive and interact with its native landscape during this formative period? What was the nature of the indigenous Crimean Tatar state prior to its annexation by the Russian Empire? These questions must be answered before beginning an exploration of the Crimean Tatar migrations to the Ottoman Empire or their exile during the Soviet period.

An understanding of the Crimean Tatars' socio-economic, political and emotional roots in the Crimean Peninsula during this long period of ethnic consolidation can provide the historian with a useful barometer for gauging the effects of separation from this land on the Crimean Tatars' communal identity in later periods. As with earlier chapters in Crimean Tatar history, the history of the Crimea and its Tatar population from the 1475 Ottoman invasion of the peninsula's southern shores to the 1783 Russian annexation of the Crimea is contested terrain. The historian must sift through competing Soviet, Russian and Crimean Tatar national histories to come to an understanding of this crucial formative period.

The Period of the Crimean Khanate in Soviet and Crimean Tatar Sources

Not surprisingly, the exiled Crimean Tatars have long viewed the epoch of the native Crimean Tatar Khanate as a halcyon period which compared drastically with their subsequent experience in the later Russian and Soviet eras. In the popular Crimean Tatar ima-

gination, the epoch of the Crimean Khanate was a glorious time when the Crimean Khans ruled a "national" state inhabited by "millions" of unified, free Tatars. This romanticized Eden was destroyed by the Russians in the centuries following the Crimea's annexation by the Russian Empire in 1783.

The epoch of the Crimean Khanate, however, has more than mere sentimental appeal to the Crimean Tatar diaspora. Crimean Tatars throughout the diaspora, regardless of the level of their political awareness, identify in varying degrees with this idealized state which forms the basis for their modern political demands. As in the case with the 20th century Zionists, who laid their claim to the lands inhabited by the Palestinian Arabs based on the existence of the Kingdom of Israel over two millennia earlier, the claim made by the Crimean Tatars that "back in history we were once a sovereign, glorious state with profound roots" has important political implications for Crimean Tatars everywhere.[1]

Metin Kırım sums up the Crimean Tatar diaspora of Turkey's romanticized vision of its cherished homeland as it existed during the period of the Crimean Khanate stating "The Khanate ruled for 360 years. During this period the most skilled warriors, and fastest cavalrymen to be found belonged to the Crimeans. The Crimean Tatars' science, artistry and justice were a model for other peoples."[2] The influential Crimean Tatar nationalist and historian from the Crimean Tatar diaspora in the Romanian province of Dobruca, Müstecip Ülküsal, paints a similar picture of the idealized Crimean Tatar state. According to this source "During that period the Crimean Turks formed a strong State organization and a disciplined army; they secured peace, tranquillity and security in their own country; they progressed in education and art; they constructed schools, mosques, palaces, caravan lodgments, roads and bridges."[3] Another Tatar writer, Arin Engin, writes "If the Crimea could have maintained her independence during the last 134 years, if she had been able to stand up against Russian pressure and had not fallen

[1] Yusuf Uralgiray. "Luzern Konferansında Kırm'ın Sesi." *Emel.* no. 105. Mart-Nisan. p. 11.

[2] Metin Kırım. "Kırım Hanlığı Ilhakı ve 1944 Sürgünü." *Emel.* no. 130. 1982. Kasim-Aralik. 1982. p. 40.

[3] Müstecip Ülküsal. "Crimean Turks. The Tragedy of the Crimean Turks and Their Cause of Independence." *The Voice of Turkism.* ed. Arin Engin. Istanbul; Ataturkist Cultural Publications, no. 18. 1964. p. 33.

under yoke, her population would have increased from 5.5 million to 25-30 million. Alas!"[4]

State-sponsored, anti-Crimean Tatar accounts which began to appear in the USSR after the 1944 deportation of this people on the other hand reflected then current political trends and described the ancestors of this nation of 'traitors to the Soviet homeland' in an altogether different light. In particular, the new Soviet histories of the Crimea posited a different interpretation of the Crimean Tatars' links to their homeland and this people's level of economic and social development under their native khans. These official Soviet histories tended to stress the undeveloped nature of Crimean Tatar 'nomadic' society and to downplay this ethnic group's sense of community and homeland. In scores of post-1944 accounts published throughout the Soviet Union, the Ottomans and their Tatar 'puppets' were portrayed respectively as either Turkish invaders or simply as an unsettled pillaging horde that roamed the territory of the Crimean Khanate without establishing roots in the peninsula.

P. N. Nadinskii's work *Essays on the History of the Crimea (Ocherkii po Istorii Kryma)*, published just seven years after the deportation of the entire Crimean Tatar nation in 1944, is one such work and must be considered a classic of historical revisionism. In his work Nadinskii claims "the Crimean Khanate had been reduced to a predatory nest acting under the wings of the Turkish emperor."[5] Nadinskii then goes on to obliquely refute the Crimean Tatars' claims to legitimate statehood and civilized socio-economic activity. According to Nadinskii "The Crimean Tatars applied themselves to peaceful economic activity in small numbers and unwillingly. The majority of them engaged in endless wars and predatory raids with the aim of robbing and acquiring profit."[6]

When competing claims to history and territory of this nature are made it should come as no surprise that there are often factual errors and contradictions in the versions espoused by both sides. The flaws in official Soviet histories, which are often replete with Marxist interpretations or Party propaganda, are all too well known in the West and need not be expounded on here. In all periods of Crimean history, it should, however, be noted that the victims of the

[4] Ibid. p. 36.

[5] P.N. Nadinskii. *Ocherkii po Istorii Kryma.* Simferopol; Krymizdat. 1951. vol. 1. p. 78.

[6] Ibid. p. 65.

Russian-Soviet Empire's state policies, the Crimean Tatars, often constructed popular counter-histories that must also be read with a cautious eye. As Richard Esbenshade states in his work on memory, national identity and history in Eastern Europe "there is no pure pristine memory beneath the state's manipulation, for its subjects are caught up in the process themselves and become guilty of mis-remembering; of manipulating of others' memory; in fact of all the crimes of the totalitarian state."[7]

An analysis of the Crimean Tatars' society during the period of the Crimean Khanate and Ottoman domination will shed light on these competing versions of this important chapter in Crimean Tatar history while providing a new picture of the Crimean Tatars and their homeland. In doing so, a fundamental reinterpretation of the Crimean Tatars, one of the least understood of East Europe's ethnies, begins to emerge...an interpretation that is often at odds with traditional Soviet, Crimean Tatar and Western accounts alike.

The Kipchak-Tatars of the Crimea and the Formation of the Crimean Khanate

The glue that provided the bond for unifying the disparate sub-ethnic groups that eventually formed the Crimean Tatar nation was to be found not in the Crimean Peninsula itself but in the Pontic Steppe to the north. It was from this region that the Chingisid traditions and political framework for the foundation of the unifying Crimean Tatar Khanate came. The steppe also provided the manpower and leadership for the forging of an independent Crimean state in the form of scores of new Kipchak-Tatar tribes who came to see the peninsula as their homeland. Often distinguished by their Altaic-Mongoloid features, the Turkic Kipchaks who roamed the plains from the Danube to the east of the Volga River represented a *mélange* of the previous Turkic nomadic peoples of the Black Sea steppes.

Unlike many of the preceding steppe confederations, that of the Kipchaks (Polovtsians in Russian accounts or Cumans in Hungarian sources) appears to have be quite organized and capable of offering

[7] Richard Esbenshade. "Remembering to Forget: Memory, History and National Identity in Postwar East-Central Europe." *Representations*. Winter 1995. no. 49. p. 78.

a sustained challenge to the Kievan Slavs who sought to expand southward towards the Caucasus.[8] Under the devastating blows of Batu Khan's Mongol divisions, however, this confederation was shattered and its tribes and clans broken up and placed under the command of Mongol chieftains of the Golden Horde. According to Charles Halperin, "the Golden Horde swallowed the enormous Polovtsian (Kipchak) population and other nomads of the steppes and gradually became a Turkic speaking state. The indigenous nomads lost their original identities and later emerged from the Mongol period in new ethnic groups with Mongol names" such as Tatar, Nogai, Kazakh and Uzbek.[9]

The new Tatar tribes that emerged from the Golden Horde were led by independent *beys* (tribal chieftains) who traced their lineage back to the leaders of the great Mongol clans that had been patron-warleaders for the conquered Kipchak tribal groupings. While these great Tatar tribes were ruled by the *Yasa* law code that some attribute to Chingis Khan, many of their customs were certainly pre-Mongol, including their migration patterns which had been followed since the days of the ancient Scythian nomads.

Contrary to a popular misconception held by sedentary societies, nomadic groups do not wander aimlessly; rather they have well-established routes of migration and pastures that are vigorously defended from the encroachments of other tribes. In this fashion, several Kipchak-Tatar clans came to consider the Crimean Peninsula, with its plains that were comparatively warm during the harsh winter months, to be a *kışlak* (Tatar, 'winter camp') for their herds and families. Among these were clans led by the *beys* of the Yashlav, Arghun, Barin, Kipchak (a clan name with obvious links to the earlier Kipchak tribes), and the powerful Shirin tribes.

As the once-unified Golden Horde (later known as the Great Horde) centered on Saray began to lose its cohesion in the late 14th century, the above mentioned clans came to see the Crimea as their tribal *yurt*. While the Tatar term *yurt* most often signifies the round, portable felt tent of the nomads, its meaning is actually more com-

[8] According to Leo de Hartog, the Kipchaks "were the most menacing group of nomads to challenge the authority of Kiev up to that time, and surpassed in stability and dwarfed in magnitude all other Turkic groups on the pre-Mongol Eurasian steppe." Leo de Hartog. *Russia and the Mongol Yoke*. London; British Academic Press. 1996. p. 4.

[9] Charles Halperin. *The Mongol Empire and the Golden Horde*. Bloomington; Indiana University Press. 1985. p. 31.

plex. For the Tatars, the term *yurt* could also designate a tribal appendage or grazing ground and in the 20th century this term was expanded by nationalists to mean homeland. To the Tatars who bivouacked in winter camps in the protected ravines of the northern Crimean steppe, the various pastures of the Crimea were seen as *yurts*, initially meaning clan territories.[10]

By the 1400s, several Tatar tribes in the Crimea, such as the Shirin and Mansur, had ceased their migrations northward out onto the open plains of the Desht-i Kipchak and had begun to sedentarize in the south Crimean foothills. In the process, many Crimean Tatars gradually changed their modes of production and began to engage in agriculture. It must be noted here that the Kipchak-Tatar nomads of the Desht-i Kipchak (and all earlier nomads of the Pontic steppe) had always supplemented their nomadism with grain growing and this transition from nomad to farmer had taken place in the region for centuries. It should also be mentioned that the Tatar clans that began to settle and engage in semi-nomadism in the south crimean piedmont probably followed in the footsteps of an earlier wave of Kipchaks who had, according to the 13th century traveler, William of Rubruck, fled into these hills following the initial Mongol conquest.[11]

The sedentarization of the Kipchak-Tatars was pronounced in the eastern Crimea, especially around such urban centers as the Genoese cities of Sudak and Kaffa, and around the administrative center of Eski Kırım. There was also considerable Tatar settlement in the West in a corridor into the mountains near the old Alan (Sarmatian) mountain fortress of Kirk Yer (Forty Places), which became the center of the *beylik* (beydom) of the Yashlav clan.[12] As the Tatars settled in these regions and amalgamated with the Turkified-Goths, Greeks, Italians and Armenians, their culture was strongly influenced by these farmers and town dwellers.[13] The powerful influence of the sedentary population on the Tatars was especially pronounced in the realm of agriculture as the nomads adopted the settled population's ancient

[10] A. Iakobson. *Krym v Srednie Veka*. Moscow; Izdatel'stvo Nauka. 1973 p. 132.
[11] William Rubruck. *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*. London; Hakluyt Society. 1990. p. 70.
[12] A. Iakobson. *Krym v Srednie Veka*. Moscow; Izdatel'stvo Nauka. 1973 p. 128.
[13] Vozgrin states "For 75 years the settled inhabitants of the horde succeeded in not only mixing with the local Italian-Greek population, but in adopting their language, culture, and beliefs." V.E. Vozgrin. *Istoricheskie Sud'by Krymskikh Tatar*. Moscow; Mysl'. 1992. p. 127

techniques for growing crops in the Crimea's dry climate. In the southern region, the culture of the local inhabitants was better adapted to the ecological environment of the Crimea and its victory in the process of acculturation was inevitable.[14]

With the semi-sedentarization of the great Tatar clans of the Crimea in the 1300s, the Crimean *beys* lost their links to the steppes and began to think of independence from the Great Horde. While the Crimean *beys* were bold enough to contemplate severing their ties with the Khan of the Great Horde, Mongol steppe tradition still dictated that the people be ruled by an *ak süyek* (white bone, i.e. a ruler of Chingisid royal decent). In the 1440s such a ruler was found in Haci Giray, a failed Chingisid contender for the throne of the Great Horde who had taken refuge in Lithuania. Haci Giray was induced by the Arghun and Shirin *beys* to rule over the Tatars of the Crimea and, in 1443, he established himself as khan of the independent Crimean *yurt*. One of Haci Giray Khan's first moves was to transfer his capital from the old administrative center of Eski Kırım westward to a narrow valley at the foot of the mountain fortress of Kirk Yer, where he probably hoped to escape the influence of the powerful Shirin clan whose lands lay in the east.

In assuming the title of khan (ruler of royal Chingisid descent), there can be little doubt that Haci Giray was establishing a state based on Mongol steppe traditions. In his important work, Uli Schamiloglu has shown that many of the newly established khanate's traditions, such as the establishment of a tribal ruling council headed by four prominent chieftains known as the *Karaçi Beys*, could be traced to Mongol or earlier Inner Asian traditions.[15] In making a claim to the Crimean patrimony as a true Chingisid, Haci Giray had his own *tamgha* (Mongol dynastic clan seal) minted and lost little time in making a claim to the pastures north of the Crimea belonging to the Great Horde. The new ruler soon began attracting tribes from the northern plains to the Crimea with the aim of strengthening his position *vis-à-vis* his rival for power in the European steppe, the Khan of the Great Horde. In conjunction with the Ottoman Sultan,

[14] Ibid. p. 140. V.A. Mikaelian. *Na Krymskoi Zemle. Istoriia Armianskikh Poselenii v Krymy*. Erevan; Izdatel'stvo Aistan. 1974. p. 15. This source claims the Armenians in the Crimea played a considerable role in sedentarizing the Tatar nomads.
[15] Uli Schamiloglu. "The Qaraçi Beys of the Later Golden Horde: Notes on the Organization of the Mongol World Empire." *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*. vol. IV. 1984. pp. 284-285.

Mehmed the Conqueror, Haci Giray also began to extend his influence over the Genoese possessions on the southern coast.

Haci Giray Khan's success in these ventures, it is theorized, excited the jealousy of the Crimean *beys* who probably had him poisoned in 1460.[16] Thereafter followed a confusing period of Great Horde intervention in the Crimea, civil war between Haci Giray's sons, Mengli and Nurdevlet, and increasing tension between the Shirin clan and the Genoese who had also begun to intervene in Tatar affairs. This civil strife was only ended when the Shirin *bey*, Eminek, made the fateful decision to request the intervention of the Ottoman Sultan in settling the succession dispute.

The Role of the Ottoman-Crimean Condominium in East European History

The Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II earned his epithet 'the Conqueror' as a result of his conquest of Constantinople, but his successful operations in the Crimea from 1475-78 were of equal importance in establishing Ottoman hegemony over the Black Sea and Eastern Europe. In this campaign, Mehmed extended Ottoman authority over the northern Black Sea (known as an 'Ottoman lake' after 1484), gained control over a powerful client state on the strategically important Crimean Peninsula, and established a new Ottoman *sancak* or *liva* (province) on the southern coast of the Crimea. Mehmed placed the contender Mengli Giray on the Crimean throne and, from this time forward, the Crimean Khan and his descendants pledged "to be friends with the Sultan's friends and enemies to his enemies."

From 1475 onwards, the Ottoman sultans could usually count on the Crimean Tatars to provide their armies with tens of thousands of skilled outriders and front-line shock cavalry that were held in awe by their Ottoman allies for their hardiness and skill in warfare.[17] Carl

[16] Alan Fisher. *The Crimean Tatars*. Stanford; Hoover Institution Press. 1978. p. 7.

[17] The Crimean Tatars joined the Ottomans as early as 1476 with 30,000 riders in Sultan Mehmed II's unsuccessful of invasion of Moldavia. R. Rossetti. "Stephen the Great of Moldavia and the Turkish Invasion (1457-1504)." *The Slavonic Review*. vol. 6. 1927-8. p. 101. According to Ottoman traveler Evliya Celebi, the Crimean Tatars usually contributed 36,000 men to Ottoman campaigns but brought 72,000 warriors when the Khan led the force in person. Rhodes Murphy. *Ottoman Warfare 1500-1700*. London; UCL Press. 1999. p. 215. n. 32.

Max Kortepeter writes of the Crimean Tatars' contribution to the Ottoman cause "The presence of the Khan was a matter of no small importance for the success or failure of the Ottoman campaign."[18] In the 17th century, the Crimean Tatars played an invaluable role in defending the borders of the *Dar al-Islam* in the Balkans. Since the Ottoman Sultan rarely took part in military campaigns, the presence of the Tatar Khan added to the discipline of the troops and the chance of any given campaign. The khan's steppe riders were in fact considered "invincible" by the ordinary people.[19]

For their part, the Crimean Khans of the Giray dynasty could rely on the powerful Ottoman fleet, cannons, wealth and *sekban* (musketeer) garrisons stationed at Kefe (Kaffa), Sudak, Mangup Kale, Kerch, Gozleve (the only port left to the Khan) and the fortress of Or Kapı-Perekop (which guarded the narrow entrance to the Crimean Peninsula) to support them in their struggles against northern neighbors, such as the Great Horde, Poland, the Don and Zaporozhian Cossacks and Muscovy.[20]

Later Soviet historians who claimed that the junior-partners in this alliance, the Tatars, were, however, nothing more than "marionettes in the hands of the Turkish sultans" are overlooking the important works by Alexandre Bennigsen and others that refute this notion.[21] Perhaps the most definitive work on this subject is by the Turkish historian Halil Inalcik. Inalcik refutes the notion that the Ottomans 'conquered' the Crimean Khanate and points out that the Crimean Khans actually entered under the protection of the sultan.[22] Fisher adds further credence to this claim and points out that:

[18] Carl Max Kortepeter. *Ottoman Imperialism During the Reformation: Europe and the Caucasus*. New York; New York Univ. Press. 1972. p. 141.

[19] Ibid.

[20] In his history of the Muscovite state's wars with the Tatars, Aleksi Novosel'skii states "Behind the Crimea always stood Turkey and a decisive struggle with the Crimea would inevitably turn into a struggle with Turkey." Aleksei Novosel'skii. *Bor'ba Moskovskogo Gosudarstva s Tatarami v Pervoi Polovine XVII Veka*. Moscow; Academy of Sciences press. 1948. p. 422.

[21] P.N. Nadinskii. *Ocherki po Istorii Kryma*. Simferopol; Krymizdat. 1951. p. 63. Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay. "Le Khanat de Crimée du XVIe Siécle de la Tradition Mongole á la Suzeraineté Ottomane d'aprés un Document Inédit des Archives Ottomanes." *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*. 13:3 (1972). pp. 321-337.

[22] Halil Inalcik. "Yeni Vesikalara Göre Kirim Hanliğinin Osmanli Tabiliğine Girmesi ve Ahidname Meselesi." *Belleten*. vol. 8. no. 31. 1944. pp. 185-229.

> From the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, the Crimean khans acted in steppe politics as virtually independent sovereigns, carrying their own diplomatic relations, sending and accepting envoys from Poland, Muscovy and Iran; they were treated by the Ottoman bureaucracy more as allies than as subjects, at least so far as diplomatic affairs went.[23]

In spite of the complex nature of their relationship, it is safe to date the founding of a stable Crimean Tatar Khanate and the Ottoman province on the southern shores of the Crimea to 1475-8. The fate of the two Turkic-Muslim states in the Crimea was thus intertwined from the very beginning. The Turkish-Tatar alliance was to be one of the most important unions in East European history and can in fact be compared to the Polish-Lithuanian Union in its duration and political significance.[24]

In the two centuries following the establishment of the Crimean-Ottoman alliance, the Sultan's enemies, from Tabriz to Vienna, came to fear the inroads of the Tatar advance guards and raiders whose fast-moving cavalry (known as *akıncıs*, Turkish 'those who flow' over the enemies' land) proved almost invincible in the lands of the *Dar al-Harb*.[25] In the undefended valleys of Austria or the plains of the Ukraine, the Crimean Tatar riders (known as *saccomani*, i.e. sackmen in the West) struck at their mutual enemies, saved Ottoman armies in crucial battles and contributed military support to the Empire that surpassed the contributions of even the Albanians, Bosnians, and Circassians to the Ottoman cause.

During the 1529 and 1683 Ottoman attacks on the Habsburg capital Vienna, for example, Crimean Tatar raiders performed their

[23] Alan Fisher. "Crimean Separatism in the Ottoman Empire." *Nationalism in a Non-National State*. ed. William Haddad. Columbus; University of Ohio Press. 1977. p. 66.

[24] Under Mengli Giray the Crimean Khanate expanded along the Black Sea coast towards the Danube in conjunction with the Ottomans. Most notably in 1484 the Crimean Tatars seized the Moldavian fortress-city of Ak Kerman (northern Delta of the Danube) in conjunction with Sultan Bayazid II whose own forces seized Kilia to the south. After the decisive defeat of the Polish ruler Jan Olbrecht at the battle of Kozmin in 1497 by the Ottomans and Tatars, the Khanate's frontiers expanded further into the Buçak region and eventually adjoined those of the Ottomans. Stanford Shaw. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. vol. 1. Cambridge; Cambridge Univ. Press. 1976. pp. 73-75.

[25] Halil Inalcik. "The Rise of the Ottoman Empire." *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*. ed. by V.J. Parry. et. al. Cambridge Univ. Press. Cambridge. 1976. p. 13.

traditional shock function and, in the fashion of their nomadic ancestors, spread devastation of a sort not seen in these regions since the great European invasion of Batu Khan.[26] In the Vienna campaign, a Christian contemporary (who, as a victim of the Crimean Tatar raids, was of course inclined to anti-Tatar sentiment) wrote of these mysterious raiders "the Tatars covered the place and, ravaging wherever they went, carried fire and sword, and destroyed everything in such a fashion that you might have thought no man had ever dwelt there." Once past Vienna, this source goes on to say, the Tatars "pursued their road, burning and ravaging the Christians and their property, violating honorable women, outraging virgins and enslaving the most comely as a present to the Grand Vezir and their khan."[27]

It was on the steppes facing the Polish Commonwealth and the expanding empire of the Russian Tsars, however, that the Crimean-Ottoman alliance focused its main efforts. While there was much tension between the Turco-Muslim allies over Ottoman interference in internal Crimean Khanate affairs, the two powers had certain shared objectives which bound them together, most notably preventing Slavic expansion onto the steppe pastures of the nomadic Tatar Nogais and keeping the Black Sea in Muslim hands. Both states had an obligation *(farz)* to defend the borders of the *Dar al-Islam* from the encroachments of the Muscovite *kafirs* (unbelievers). With this aim, Crimean Tatar war parties (known in Tatar as *cambuls*) made annual forays into the lands of the Poles and Russians with the aim of destroying Slavic settlements in the steppe region and acquiring slaves and booty.

While countless raids were made deep into Russian territory from the 1400s to the 1600s by independent Crimean Tatar *beys*, the khan's army and nomadic Tatar-Nogai hordes of the steppe, no raid was as devastating as the great raid on Ivan the Terrible's Moscow made by Khan Devlet Giray in 1571. In that year, the army of Devlet Giray Khan (who was subsequently known in Tatar sources as *Taht-Algan*, 'Seizer of the Throne', i.e. the Russian capital) outmaneuvered a Russian army and sacked the part of the Tsar's capital lying outsi-

[26] Thomas Barker. *Double Eagle and Crescent*. Albany; State University of New York Press. 1967. p. 220.

[27] Jeremiah Cacavellas. *The Siege of Vienna by the Turks*. London; Cambridge Univ. Press. 1925. p. 47.

de the protective walls of the Kremlin fortress.[28] A 16th-century source describes this sad event as follows:

> The city he took not, but fired the suburbs, which by reason of the building (which is all of wood without any stone, brick, or lime, save certain out rooms) kindled so quickly and went on with such rage as that it consumed the greatest part of the city, almost within the space of four hours, being of thirty miles or more compass. Then might you have a lamentable spectacle, besides the huge and mighty flame of the city all on light fire, the people burning in their houses and streets, but most of all of such as labored to pass out of the gates farthest from the enemy, where meeting together in a mighty throng and so pressing every man to prevent another, wedged themselves so fast within the gate and streets near unto it as that three ranks walked one upon the other's head, the uppermost treading down those that were lower, so that there perished at that time (as was said) by the fire and the press the number of 800,000 people or more.
>
> The Krym, thus having fired the city and fed his eyes with the sight of it all on a light of flame, returned with his army and sent to the Russe emperor a knife (as was said) to stick himself withal, upbraiding this loss and his desperate case as not daring either to meet his enemy in the field nor to trust his friends or subjects at home.[29]

The number of casualties from this raid was grossly exaggerated in this account (the population of 16th-century Moscow was just over 100,000) but this and other raids by the Khan's army made a deep impact on the Russians who suffered heavy losses in them. Even today Russians have a deep-seated distrust of the Tatars which stems from this and earlier periods which is demonstrated in Russian proverbs and stereotypes which are frequently anti-Tatar. Seen in the light of the 1571 attack on Moscow, Russian sayings such as the proverb "an uninvited guest is worse than a Tatar" *(ne zhdanny gost khuze Tatarina)* certainly have a basis in history. If the attacks by the Crimean army were not sufficiently devastating from the Christian perspective, the rather independent Nogai-Tatar nomads of the open steppe and Crimean *beys* engaged in frequent unauthorized slave raids and incursions into Poland, the Ukraine and Russia that earned them great notoriety in the lands subjected to their depredations.[30]

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[28] Özalp Gökbilgin. *1532-1577 Yillari Arasinda Kirım Hanliği'nin Siyasi Durumu.* Ankara; Sevin Matbaası. 1973. p. 53.

[29] Giles Fletcher. *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom.* ed. Lloyd Berry and Robert Crummey. Madison; Univ. of Wisconsin Press. 1968. p. 192.

[30] The memory of these Tatar raids is still alive in Russian national history and has had a considerable impact on contemporary Russian views of the Crimean Tatars. J. Otto Pohl has pointed out that "The slave raiding expeditions against Russia by the Crimean khanate are still viewed by many as sufficient justification for the deportation of the Crimean Tatars over 150 years later." J. Otto Pohl. *The Stalinist Penal System. A Statistical History of Soviet Repression and Terror, 1930-1953.* Jefferson North Carolina; McFarland and Co. 1997. p. 91.

With the establishment of Ottoman control over Kefe (Kaffa), this city became the largest slave emporium in Eastern Europe as the insatiable Ottomans purchased scores of Slavic peasants from the nomads for their galleys, armies and harems. For two centuries the Crimean Tatars' activities, which have been described as a "harvesting of the steppe," kept the Slavs off the rich lands of the nomads (described in Russian sources as the 'Wild Field' *'Dikoe Pole')* and deprived their masters of tens of thousands of peasants.[31] According to one Polish historian, Poland may have lost close to a million people to Tatar raiders from the years 1550 to 1694.[32] A Soviet historian gives support to this estimate claiming that the left bank of the Ukraine lost more than 100,000 people to Tatar raiders in a ten year period during the seventeenth century.[33] Although these figures are most probably exaggerated, there can be little doubt that the scale of the slave trade during this period was certainly impressive.

Kefe's Christian neighbors were of course intensely aware of the damage inflicted by these slave raids and Ukrainian folk tales *(dumy)* often describe the adventures of heroes who fought the dreaded Tatar raiding parties. A 16th-century Lithuanian wrote of this slave trade "They are selling slaves in all the Crimean cities but especially in Kaffa", where this source claims "herds of these unfortunate folk sold into slavery are driven onto the boats in the harbor of Kaffa. Because of this practice, the city of Kaffa may well be called a heathen giant who feeds on our blood."[34]

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[31] Alan Fisher. "Muscovy and the Black Sea Trade." *Canadian American Slavic Studies.* 6. no. 4. 1972. p. 241.

[32] Alan Fisher. "Azov in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas.* 21. (1972). p. 168.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Most Slavic slaves made their way from Kaffa to the Ottoman Empire where they ended up as domestics, slave soldiers, field workers, or galley rowers. Many did, however, rise to high positions. Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent's favorite and the mother of Sultan Selim II, Roxelanna, was by most accounts a Russian slave. Michael Hrushevsky. *A History of Ukraine.* New Haven; Yale University Press. p. 161.

Traditional Misconceptions Concerning the Crimean Khanate's Role in East European History

In his 19th century account of the Crimean Tatars, Charles Scott wrote "It must always be remembered that the Tartars, like the Turks, have generally had their enemies as their historians."[35] As a result of the aforementioned activities, this people certainly did not receive a favorable or accurate press from their neighbors during the period of the Crimean Khanate. The Russians, Moldavians, Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians, Austrians and Balkan Christians saw the Crimean Tatars as a savage horde and a heathen threat to Christendom. In the popular Christian imagination, the Crimean Tatars were pictured as 'wolves of the wild fields', the eternal nomadic threat to peaceful agrarian society. Giles Fletcher's 16th century account of the Crimean Tatars, which was widely known in England, is typical of this genre. Of the Crimean Tatars' society, Fletcher wrote:

> The whole nation of the Tatars are utterly void of all learning and without written law.
>
> Towns they plant none nor other standing buildings but have walking houses, which the Latins call *veii*, built upon wheels like a shepherd's cottage.
>
> (the Crimean Khan) hath no seat of his empire but an *agora*, or town of wood, that moveth with him whithersoever he goeth. As for the fixed and standing building used in other countries, they say they are unwholesome and unpleasant.[36]

Few accounts of the Crimean Tatars from this period (including Giles Fletcher's often inaccurate second-hand description of the Crimean Tatars) are, however, based on eyewitness accounts of the Crimea, its culture or its native Tatar population. While many Christians traded in the Crimea, visited the peninsula and lived there, few first-hand accounts of the mysterious lands of 'Crim Tatary' or 'Little Tatary' during the period of the Crimean Khanate have come down to us. Most contemporary accounts deal only with the nomadic incursions by the Tatar raiders and few accounts from the period attempt to provide a three dimensional picture of life in the Khanate itself. An analysis of the Crimean Tatars and their homeland during

[35] Charles Scott. *The Baltic, the Black Sea and the Crimea.* London; Richard Bentley. 1854. p. 207.
[36] Giles Fletcher. op. cit. no. 29. pp. 197-200.

the period of the Crimean Khanate reveals a more complex picture of this people and their ties to the Crimea than those given by Fletcher and others. A survey of the Crimean *yurt* during this period in fact dispels the notion that the *Krymskaia Orda* or *Perekopskaia Orda* (Crimean or Perekop Horde), as this state was known in Russian sources, was simply a "hotbed of aggression against the Russian and Ukrainian peoples."[37]

Urban Life in the Crimean Khanate

Contrary to Fletcher's account, there were indeed thriving urban centers in the lands of the Crimean Tatars and there was a settled agrarian core to the Crimean Khanate. The center of Crimean Tatar culture and political life was the khan's capital at Bahçesaray (Garden Palace). Built on a rivulet known as the Çuruk Su (Cloudy Water) in a narrow valley at the foot of the Kirk Yer plateau-fortress, the khan's palace provided the nucleus for a state that was to rule much of Eastern Europe for over three hundred years. The construction of the Khan Saray (Khan's Palace) was begun in 1503, a year after Mengli Giray Khan fulfilled his father's dream and defeated the Great Horde in a battle for control of the tribes of the Desht-i Kipchak.[38]

On the entrance to the famed Great Portal (also known in Tatar as the *Demir Kapi,* the Iron Gate, or the Aleviza Portal in honor of its architect) in the Khan Saray, the Crimean Khan had his distinctive trident-shaped, Chingisid *tamgha* engraved to proclaim his legitimate right to rule as a descendent of the Mongol Empire's founder. It was this nomadic dynastic symbol that was later appropriated by 20th century Crimean Tatar nationalists, such as Numan Çelebi Cihan and Cafer Seydahmet, for the entire Crimean Tatar people to represent their newly-forged sense of nationhood in 1917. In the final days of the Russian Empire, this symbol indeed proved to be the most enduring national icon for Crimean Tatars who compared the romanticized epoch of the Crimean Khans with their status as an oppressed, landless minority in their own Russian-dominated homeland.

[37] *Great Soviet Encyclopedia.* New York; Macmillan Inc. vol. 13. 1976. p. 225.
[38] Leslie Collins. "On the Alleged 'Destruction' of the Great Horde." *Byzantine Forshungen.* vol. 16. 1991. pp. 361-399. This source provides a reinterpretation of the "destruction" of this state.

Today the *tamgha* of the Giray dynasty (known as the *tarak tamgha*, the 'trident seal') has, after a 75 year Soviet-enforced absence, once again become a national symbol for the returning Crimean Tatars who inscribe it on their simple concrete mosques, emblazon it on flags above their settlements, and paint it on their ubiquitous *shashlik* (shish-kabob) stands which now dot the Crimea's highways. The Crimean Tatars of the post-Soviet period have not forgotten that their ancestors ruled a vast state from Bahçesaray that extended over much of what is today Russia, the Ukraine, and Moldavia. Indeed, it is to this period that the contemporary Crimean Tatar nationalists look for their inspiration.

Although their forefathers ruled over a land that extended far beyond the boundaries of the Crimean Peninsula itself, the present day Crimean Tatar nation does not claim as its *anayurt* (motherland) those parts of the Ukrainian mainland once ruled by the Crimean Giray Khans. Following the defeat of the Great Horde, the Giray Khans, however, claimed to be rulers over not just the Crimean Peninsula; but of the *Ulugh Yurt* ('Great Pastures' of the Pontic steppe inhabited by nomadic Nogai hordes); several tribes of Circassians (Caucasian Muslim highlanders living on the Eastern shore of the Black Sea); and Moldavia, which was "practically subject to the khan of the Crimea."[39]

With the brutal conquest of the Crimea's sister Tatar Khanates of Kazan (1552) and Astrakhan (1554-6) and disruption of the Nogai Horde by the expanding power of Russia, the Crimean Khanate in fact became the last bastion of Turco-Islamic power on the Black Sea steppe. Whole hordes of Nogais, the nomadic detritus left over from the destruction of the Great Horde, migrated westward from the *Kïçi* (Little) and *Ulugh* (Large) Nogai hordes to the steppe land claimed by the last of Europe's Chingisid khans in the Crimea. As the Russians and their hard-fighting Uralsk Cossack and Mongol Kalmyk subjects expanded onto the steppes of the northern Caspian and attacked the Nogais' 'capital' of Sarychik to the east of Astrakhan in 1580 these Nogais sought new pastures in lands claimed by the Crimean Khanate.[40] This Crimean-dominated steppe extended

[39] D. P. Soulotis. "A Greek Prelate in the Tatar Khanate of the Crimea in the Early Seventeenth Century." *Balkan Studies*. vol. 31. 1990. p. 275.

[40] For a history of the Nogais see Sami Nogay. *Nogay Türkleri*. Istanbul; 1997. Ethem Feyzi Gözaydin. *Kırım. Kırım Türklerinin Yerleşme ve Göcmeleri*. Istanbul; Vakıt Matbaası. 1948. p. 25.

from the Kuban plain (northern Caucasus), across the southern Ukraine, to a grazing land known to the Kipchak-Tatars as the Buçak (southern Moldavia/Bessarabia). Many Nogai Tatars also migrated to the Crimean steppe south of the frontier fortress of Or Kapı where they provided the final ethnic component in the forging of the Tatar people of the Crimea.

While the khan's seat of power, Bahçesaray, was not a large town by contemporary East European standards, in a short period it became a center of Crimean Tatar art, Islam, political authority and culture.[41] The world renowned *Zinjirli Medrese* (lit. 'Chains' Religious Seminary, named for the chain hanging over the entrance to the building) was built in the Salacik suburbs of the Khan's capital. The famous Bahçesaray *kilims* (Oriental rugs) were woven here for export to Poland and, in one year alone, more than 400,000 distinctive Bahçesaray knives were made for export to the tribes of the Caucasus by the city's masters known as *usta-başıs*.[42]

Other important towns of the Khanate included Gozleve (renamed Evpatoriia by the Russians), a western port-city belonging to the Khan. This port was noteworthy for its Turkified Jewish minority, known as the Karaims, and the elegant Cuma Cami (Friday Mosque) built by the great Ottoman architect Sinan Pasha on the model of the Suleimaniye mosque in Istanbul.[43] Mention should also be made of the eastern city of Karasu Bazar (Black Water Market), which was a center for cattle trade, and Moroccan leather production. It was also seat of the Shirin clan *beylik* and was famous for its fortress-like covered bazaar and craft guilds.[44] In addition, the administrative center of Ak Mecit (White Mosque), just north of the Yaila range, was seat of the *Kalgay*, (heir to the Crimean throne) and site of a mosque for which the city was named.[45] Finally, in the northern Crimea there was the frontier fortress city of Or Kapı (often known

[41] V.E. Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 13. p. 132.

[42] Leslie Collins. "The Military Organization and Tactics of the Crimean Tatars, 16th-17th Centuries." *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*. V.J. Parry and M.E. Yapp. London; Oxford Univ. Press. 1975. p. 268-270.

[43] Burchard Brentjes. "Islamische Architektur an der Wolga und auf der Krim." *Vormoderne. Europe in der Fruehen Neutzeit. Festschrift fuer Gunter Meuhlpfort*. ed. by Erich Donner. Weimar; Koeln. 1997. pp. 351-358.

[44] Carl Max Kortepeter. "Karasu Bazar." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. vol. IV. Iran-Kha. Leiden; EJ Brill. 1978. pp. 629-630.

[45] For a virtual tour of the Crimea's Tatar towns see: http://www.angelfire.com/tn/iccrimea/monuments.html or http://www.ug.bcc.bilkent.edu.tr/~Kemala/krim.html

as the 'Golden Gate' or by its Russian name, Perekop) a center for a thriving salt trade with the Ukraine and, in the final years of the Crimean Khanate, a military administrative forepost for the Crimea on the frontier with the encroaching Russian-Christian world.[46]

None of these Tatar cities, however, compared in size or magnificence to the Ottoman coastal province's capital of Kefe (Kaffa), the former seat of the Genoese '*Caput di Ghazarie*' ('Administration of Khazaria', the Genoese designation for its Crimean province). With a population that fluctuated between 75,000 and 100,000, Ottoman Kefe was one of the most populous towns in the Ottoman Empire following the main urban centers (such as Istanbul, Cairo, Aleppo, Damascus, Bursa, Adrianople, and Salonika), a fact which is generally overlooked in Western sources.[47] The governors of Kefe administered the Crimea's southern shore and southern flank of the coastal mountains as direct representatives of the Ottoman sultan in Istanbul.[48]

The multitude of minarets dotting Kefe's skyline led Turkish merchants to compare it to Istanbul itself and earned it the title *Küçük Stambul* (Little Istanbul) or *Yarım Stambul* (Half Istanbul). During this period, Kefe was inhabited by Turkish officials and soldiers, Jewish merchants, large Armenian and Greek populations with their own churches and monasteries, Circassians, and Yaliboyu-Tatar craftsmen.[49] Kefe was, in effect, a frontier microcosm of the Sultan's multi-ethnic capital on the Golden Horn and the main economic center for trade between the peoples of the northern Black Sea and Anatolia. Ottoman princes, such as the future Ottoman Sultans Selim I (who married Mengli Giray Khan's daughter, Hafsa Hatum) and his son, Suleiman the Magnificent, lived in this bustling frontier port as apprentice-governors and embellished this city with numerous mosques (such as Suleiman's Kebir Cami), public baths, fountains,

[46] V.E. Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 13. p 133.

[47] V.E. Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 13. p. 130. and Giles Veinstein. "From the Italians to the Ottomans; The Case of the Northern Black Sea Coast in the Sixteenth Century." *Mediterranean Historical Review*. vol. 1, no. 2. Dec. 1986. pp. 221-238.

[48] Although the *timar* system of land grants was not as wide spread in this province as elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. Irene Beldiceanu-Steinher et. al. "La Crimee Ottomane et l'institution du Timar" *Annali (Aion). Instituto Orientale di Napoli*. vol. 39. (new series 29). 1979. p. 525.

[49] Francesco Becattini. *Storia Della Crimea, Piccola Tataria*. Rome; Presso Leonardo Bassaglia. 1785. p. 9.

bazaars, caravansaries and *medreses*.[50] From the *sancak* capital an Ottoman *sancakbey* (governor) protected the vital Black Sea trade routes with Istanbul, Varna, Trebizond and Sinop from Cossack raiders, kept recalcitrant khans of the neighboring Tatar state in line with Ottoman foreign policy, and gradually extended Ottoman influence into the neighboring mountains inhabited by the Yaila Tat-Tatars.[51]

Relations Between the Sedentary Tats and Nomadic Nogais in the Crimean Khanate

In the mountainous region to the north-west of Kefe, the authority of the Tatar khan and the Ottoman *sancakbey* (later the province's importance was upgraded and it was ruled by a *beylerbey*, a 'governor general') was blurred and the Oghuz Turkish of Anatolia spoken on the coast blended with that of the Kipchak Turkic of the steppe to create the basis of the modern Crimean Tatar language. Fisher claims that Ottoman authority in the Crimea spread from the coast as far north as the neighborhood of Bahçesaray itself and Turkish culture and language became widespread throughout the mountainous lands of the Crimean Tat-Tatars.[52] The Crimean Tatars of today cherish this region which, during the period of the khanate, was thickly settled with terraced mountain villages. For the Crimean Tatars, this area was in Ernst Kudusov's words "a unique cradle for the formation of a native ethnos."[53]

The Crimean Tatars are correct in their claims that they were forged in these mountains, for it was the settled Crimean Tatars of the mountains, derisively known as Tats by the proud nomadic Nogai-

[50] S. Soucek. "Kefe." *Encyclopedia of Islam*. vol. 4. new ed. Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1978. and Andre Clot. *Suleiman the Magnificent*. London; Saqi Books. 1992. p. 27. Most of these edifices were destroyed during the first hundred years of Russian colonial rule in the Crimea.

[51] Victor Ostapchuk. "Five Documents from the Topkapi Palace Archive on the Ottoman Defense of the Black Sea Against the Cossacks (1639)." *Journal of Turkish Studies*. 1987, no. 11. pp. 49-104.

[52] Alan Fisher. "Sources and Perspectives for the Study of Ottoman-Russian Relations in the Black Sea Region." *International Journal of Turkish Studies*. vol. 1. no. 2. 1980. p. 81.

[53] Ernst Kudusov. *Istoriia Formirovanniia Krymskotatarskoi Natsii*. Simferopol; Kasavet. 1996. p. 8.

Tatars of the Crimean plain, who provided the Crimean Khanate with the majority of its artisans, bureaucrats, farmers and, in a word, gave this sprawling state a stable administrative core.[54] These sedentary Tat-Tatars of Gothic, Alan, Genoese, Armenian, Greek and Anatolian-Turkish descent were aware of their separate identity from the nomads and were recognized as a distinct people from the Nogai Tatars by the Crimean Khans. In his royal title, the Crimean Khan, Janibeg Giray claimed, for example, to be "Great *Padishah* (Sultan) of the Great Horde, the great *yurt*, the *Deşt-i Qipçaq*, the throne of the Crimea, the right and left wing, many Tatars and numerous Nogays, Tats, Tavgaç (a word of Central Asian origin not understood in this context), and the mountain Çerkes (Circassians)."[55] Among the officials in the Crimean Khanate's bureaucracy it is also interesting to note the existence of a minister dealing with Tat affairs known as the *Tat-ağası* ('Lord of the Tats').[56] The predominance of the Tat element on the southern coast was also demonstrated by the fact that this littoral was known as the *Tat-ili* (Land of the Tats) in Tatar and Ottoman sources.[57]

As time passed, the differences between the Tatars who settled in Bahçesaray, Karasubazar, and numerous villages in the southern mountains or Ottoman coast, and the still-nomadic Nogais of the Crimean steppe continued. For example, the Nogai steppe clans, such as the Naimans, Qongrats, Karluks, Kereits, Arghuns and Kipchaks, maintained their importance while the Tatars who settled in the south adopted the ways of the settled Greeks, Armenians, Karaim Jews, and Turks and lost their clan ties. While the Nogai Tatars continued to maintain their 'true' steppe patterns, the Islamic traditions of the Ottomans by contrast took precedent among the settled Crimean Tatars by the year 1584. In that year Khan Islam Giray II (a pliant

[54] K. Kongonashvili uses terminology similar to Kudusov's in his history, claiming "the Islamization of the native population occurred and the mountain-forest zones of the peninsula became the center for the forging of an ethnos, the Crimean Tatars." K. Kongonashvili. *Kratkii Slovar' Istorii Kryma*. Simferopol; Biznes-Inform. 1995. pp. 149-150.

[55] Mary Ivanics. "Formal and Linguistic Peculiarities of 17th Century Crimean Tatar Letters Addressed to Princes of Transylvania." *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientarum Hungaricae*. vol. 29, (2). 1975. p. 215. The term *tavgach* or *tabgach* initially referred to the Turkic or Mongol T'opa Wei dynasty (386-534) of northern China and came to signify China or the East in later periods.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Halil Inalcik. "Giray." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*. vol. II. Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1965. p. 113.

Ottoman candidate on the Crimean throne) recognized the Ottoman Empire's dominant position in the Crimea by having the sultan's name read in the *hütbe* (Friday sermon) recited in mosques throughout the Crimean Khanate (a traditional sign of Islamic sovereignty).

The coastal population of the Ottoman province of Kefe (known as the Yaliboyu, 'Sea Shore') subsequently came under strong Anatolian influence and there was little difference between this subgroup's customs or dialect and that of the Anatolian Turks.[58]

While Islam did unite the Nogais of the steppes and the Tats of the Crimean south, it should be stated that the southerners had a more institutionalized version of Islam that borrowed from the ancient pagan and Christian practices of the southern peoples of the Crimea, while the Islam of the Nogai steppe herders was informal and filled with shamanistic steppe traditions.[59]

As Islam increasingly became the defining culture among the settled Crimean Tatars, clerics trained in Istanbul came to have greater power in the Crimean countryside than the traditionalists who called for a return to the old steppe ways and Chingisid traditions. By contrast, the Islam practiced by the nomadic Nogais was in a watered down form and it was never as strong among this group as it was among the settled Tat-Tatars, and this added to the contention between the two groups. As late as the 19th century a Russian source mentions this dichotomy and states:

> The occupation of the steppe dwellers consists of grain-growing and herding. The mountaineers were occupied, for the most part, in agriculture and market gardening, tobacco-growing and grape-growing. The latter (the Tats), as is usually the case with renegades, display greater fanaticism than the steppe dwellers and are not loved by the last named who call them Tats-an abbreviation for the word 'Murtat', which means renegade.[60]

As was the case in the pre-modern Uzbek states of Central Asia (the Khanates of Khiva, Khokand and Emirate of Bukhara), there was in the Crimea a delicate balance and a symbiosis between the no-

[58] While there are many similarities between the Kipchak and Oghuz dialects, they can in many ways be considered different languages. Rasul Gamzatov "Iazik". *Krymskie Tatary. Istoriko-Lingvisticheskii Ocherk*. Simferopol; Anayurt. 1993. pp. 34-36.

[59] Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 13. p. 192.

[60] P. Mart'ianov. "Posledniaia Emigratsiia Tatar iz Kryma v 1874 godu." *Istoricheskii Vestnik*. vol. 24. (1886). p. 701.

madic peoples and the settled population. While the settled population relied on the nomads for wool, milk, cheese, cattle, mutton, horses, steppe wheat and other products of the plain, the nomads depended on the bazaris of the Crimea's urban centers for manufactured items that could not be produced in their simple nomadic *auls* (villages) or encampments. In spite of their mutual dependency, no love was lost between the two groups who were united only in their shared sense of belonging to the Islamic *umma* (ecumenical community of believers), their geographic identification with the *Dar al-Islam* and their (nominal in the case of the Nogais) allegiance to the Crimean Khan. The two groups were mutually self conscious and were often known by their geographically-based ethnonyms. Among themselves the northern Nogai were known as the *Çöl Halki* (People of the Plains) and the Tats as the *Şehir Ham Taw Halki (Town and Mountain People)*.[61]

The Role of the Nogais in Crimean History

Perhaps one of the most overlooked aspects of the relationship between the Nogai hordes, who ranged the steppes of the northern Crimea and southern Ukraine, and the settled Crimean Tatars of the south, was the Nogais' gradual usurpation of the military role in Crimean foreign policy.[62] Leslie Collins claims:

> From the late sixteenth century onwards an increasing number of Tatars in the Crimea took up farming and were less able to fight. These people were often permitted to purchase exemption from military service. The Noghay Tatars, however, remained nomadic, and continued to provide the Khans with numerous, but ill-disciplined detachments.[63]

Forming a series of nomadic hordes that pastured on the Kuban steppe to the north of the Caucasus (the Kuban Horde), north of the Crimea (the Yediçkul Horde), to the northwest of the Crimea, between the Dnieper and the Dniester Rivers (the Djambulaq and Yedisan Hordes), between the Dniester and the Danube rivers (the

[61] Peter Andrews. "Tatars." *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey*. ed. Peter Andrews. Wiesbaden; Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag. 1989. p. 446.

[62] According to Murat Adzhi, it was this Kipchak nomadic element that "acted as the main military force of the Khanate and controlled state politics in their collective interests." Murat Adzhi. "Polovetskoe Pole." *Kirim*. Oct. 4, 1997. p. 3.

[63] Leslie Collins. op. cit. no. 42. p. 259.

Buçak Horde), and on the plains of the Crimea itself, the Nogai-Tatars played a militarily dominant role in Crimean affairs from the year 1502 onward. While the Nogai nomadic tribes had an important function as the Crimea's outer cordon against the Don and Zaporozhian Cossacks, their role in Crimean history was not always positive. These unruly nomads invaded the Crimea on several occasions (most notably during the reign of Sahib Giray), killed Khan Mehemed Giray I when he attempted to extend control over their tribal lands and often raided neighboring lands for slaves without the permission of the Crimean Khan or Ottoman *sancakbey*.[64]

While the Crimean Tatars as a whole are generally portrayed as 'wolves of the steppe' it would seem that it was actually the nomadic Nogai Tatar element that continued to raid the neighboring lands and provide hardy cavalry for the Crimean Khan during his increasingly limited forays into the heavily defended lands of the Russians and Poles. The Nogais were considered by their contemporaries to be 'born horsemen' as a result of their nomadic lifestyle and were a cavalry force *par excellence*, while the long-settled Tat Tatars of the south were certainly less adept at raiding and steppe warfare. Later accounts point to the discrepancies in the horsemanship of the Tat-Tatars and the Nogai-Tatars. According to a 19th century observer:

> The mountaineers are clumsy horsemen, in which they resemble the northern Tartars. Their neighbors (the Nogais) ride very boldly, and well. I had an opportunity of seeing two Nogay shepherd-boys, who were galloping their horses near Koslof (Gozleve), and who showed an agility and dexterity which were really surprising.[65]

The sources point to the paradox that "the main mass of 'Crimean Tatars' during attacks consisted for the most part not of Crimeans but of inhabitants of the Black Sea steppe."[66] It would appear that the agrarian lifestyle of the farmers, shepherds and ploughman was

[64] Alan Fisher. *The Crimean Tatars*. Stanford; Hoover Institution Press. 1979. p. 25. In his history of the Ukraine, Paul Magocsi states "After the mid-sixteenth century, it was the various Nogay tribal confederations, especially the Yediçkul, who carried out the slave raids, while Crimean Tatars acted as middlemen between the Nogay suppliers in the north and the Ottoman purchasers in the south." Paul Magocsi. *A History of the Ukraine*. Seattle; Univ. of Washington Press. 1996. p. 177.

[65] Edward Clarke. *Travels in Various Countries of Europe and Asia. Part one. Russia, Tahtary and Turkey*. London; T. Cadell and W. Davies. 1816. p. 313.

[66] Vozgrin op. cit. no. 13. p. 160.

to become predominate in the southern Crimean Peninsula itself by the late 16th century leaving the Nogais as the main nomadic element in the Crimea.[67]

In the process of settling in and blending with the people of the south Crimean mountains the sources agree that a more "pacific" and "aristocratic" society emerged among the Crimean Tatars who felt the lure of sedentary agriculture.[68] In his 19th century article on the Crimean Tatars, G. N. Levitskii, for example, wrote "The Crimean Tatars lost their warlike tendencies, gradually settled on the peninsula and became accustomed to the settled way of life and linked to the soil."[69] By the 1700s the majority of the Crimean Peninsula's inhabitants were in fact settled and engaged in agricultural pursuits.[70] By the time of the khanate's conquest by the Russian Empire, Thunmann was able to write of the Crimean Tatars "They are all settled and live in homes, villages and towns, except for several Nogais who recently moved to the Crimea. They are engaged in grain-growing, viniculture, and gardening, although still not as assiduously as they should."[71]

In the mountains and fertile valleys of the south and also on the Kerch Peninsula (eastern Crimea) Druzhinina points out that grain growing reached a very high level of development.[72] The Nogai element in the Crimea was concentrated on the flat Kerch peninsula, the central plains and in the vicinity of the Gozleve.[73] This element too felt the lure of sedentary life and many Nogai tribes gradually became semi-nomadic or settled by the 18th century. The sedentarization of the nomadic Tatars was in part due to the Ottoman Empire's growing need for grains from the Black Sea steppe. More and more nomads turned to grain growing as a profitable supplement to their animal husbandry and became sendentarized in

[67] Ibid.
[68] William McNeill. *Europe's Steppe Frontier 1500-1800*. Chicago; University of Chicago Press. 1964. p. 120.
[69] G. N. Levitskii. "Pereselenie Tatar iz Kryma v Turtsiiu." *Vestnik Evropy*. v. 5. p. 598.
[70] A.R. Andreev. *Istoriia Kryma*. Moscow; Izdatel'stvo Mezhregional'ny Tsentr. 1997. p. 168.
[71] Thunman. *Der Krimische Staat (Krymskoe Khanstvo)*. Simferopol; Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Krym. ASSR. 1936. p. 24.
[72] Elena Druzhinina. *Severnoe Prichernomor'e*. Moscow; Akademiia Nauk. 1959. p. 111.
[73] Etham Feyzi Gözaydin. *Kırım. Kırım Türklerinin Yerleşme ve Göçmeleri*. Istanbul; Vakit Matbaası. 1948. p. 30.

the process. For their part, the Russians and Cossacks were, by the 1700s, able to expand onto the 'Wild Fields' of the southern Ukraine using *tabors* (armed wagon formations), *falconets* (portable cannons), improved muskets, defensive palisades and a system of watchtowers to defeat the steppe Nogais' attempts to raid Slavic settlements.[74]

The Role of the Tats in Crimean History

While the Kipchak-Nogais were seen as closely resembling their kin, the Kazakh nomads of Asia, in their 'Mongol' physiognomy, culture and language, the inhabitants of the southern coast more closely resembled the farming peoples of the Caucasus.[75] This can be attributed to the historic links between the Caucasus and the Crimea which can be traced back to the migrations of ancient peoples from this mountain range to the peninsula.[76]

A more nuanced analysis of the settled Tatar 'core' of the Crimean Khanate, and description of the Crimean Tatars' culture and ties to the land also dispels the notion later propagated by Soviet sources that "The primary occupation of the Crimean Tatars was war and predatory attacks with the aim of plunder and profit."[77] In his history of the Crimea written prior to the deportation of the Crimean Tatars, for instance, Soviet historian Anatolii Iakobson, writes:

> Involving themselves in direct and daily intercourse with the aborigines of the region-primarily Greek agriculturists, the settled Tatars not only began to slowly assimilate the village social structure, formed here during the Middle Ages in the form of the village agricultural commune, they adopted important elements of ancient local material culture, village production techniques and, in particular, the techniques of wine growing and fruit growing and artisan techniques as well as the form of planning two-storied houses with the a stone first floor and adobe second floor, with an ancient framework on which a section hangs out over the first floor.[78]

[74] S. K. Bogoiavlensky. "Vooruzhenie Russkikh Voisk v XVI-XVII vv." *Istoricheskie Zapiski*. no. 4. 1939. pp. 258-283.
[75] Gözaydin. op. cit. no. 73. p. 30.
[76] A.M. Leskov. *Gorny Krym v I Tysiacheleii do Nashei Ery*. Kiev; Naukova Dumka. 1965. pp. 155-160.
[77] *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*. no. 23. 1953 ed. p. 552.
[78] A. Iakobson. op. cit. no. 12. p. 148.

The larger portion of the Tatar ethnos of the Crimea was centered in a series of villages along the southern and northern edges of the Crimean mountains or in villages perched on the side of mountains and inter-montane valleys.[79] Here, these ancient inhabitants of the peninsula built specialized irrigation canals to water their fields, worshipped in their village mosques and gave their primary loyalty to their village *bey*, sub-ethnic group or, most importantly, to their village-commune.

When the nomads settled, they adopted as a form of social organization the ancient village-commune, known in Tatar as a *cemaat*, which had existed in the region for centuries. Of the *cemaat*, Iakobson writes "The *Kaziasker* (Muslim village judiciary) books of the 17th and 18th centuries describe the *cemaat* as a village-commune with collective land property, communal hay making and shepherding-(this took place in the forest which were also very suitable for raising sheep)-and exerting control over that which was most valued by the commune, the communal well."[80]

In the lands inhabited by the Tat village-communes, peaches, pears, apples and other fruits were skillfully grown, vineyards were cultivated on the warm southern slopes of the Yaliboyu coast, tobacco was grown for domestic use and export and honey was produced. A historical account claims of the Crimean Tatars "They were great masters of agriculture, they developed 100 sorts of apples and pears, peaches, and quinces, almonds, figs, and they were unsurpassed in melon growing, tobacco raising, and sheep breeding."[81] While the Tatars, as Muslims, officially abstained from wine consumption, which was proscribed by the Prophet, the southern coast of the Crimea continued to produce (and consume) the famous wines that had grown in this region since Strabo described the peninsula's grapes centuries earlier. In this region there were:

[79] In his study of the economic geography of this region, David Lynch states "The Khan lived in the mountainous portion of the Crimea, and here his immediate subjects, the Crimean Tatars, supported themselves primarily by irrigated agriculture." David Lynch. *The Conquest, Settlement and Initial Development of New Russia.* New Haven; Yale Univ. Press. 1969. p. vii.

[80] A. Iakobson. op. cit. no. 12. p. 137.

[81] K. Kongonashvili. op. cit. no. 54. p. 152. Kemal Karpat similarly writes "The Tatars living along the shore, or the *yaliboyu*, as they called it were involved in trade and cultivated fruit trees, while the peasants living on the arid lands in the interior and on the steppes north of the Perekop raised a variety of dry-land crops." Kemal Karpat. *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914.* Madison Wisconsin; Univ. of Wisconsin Press. 1985. p. 76.

> Grapes of various sorts, both local (Greek and Roman vines) and those brought in from other lands, the Tatars' love of which is attested by Khartakai (a later visitor to the Crimea) as approaching ecstasy; in the end of the 18th century, 56 types of grapes were counted. On the southern shore of the Crimea as many as 300 vats of wine were squeezed in a year, but in the Kacha and Belbek valleys (south-west of Bahçesaray) even more. By this time the whole Mediterranean and East praised the unique wine of the Sudak valley and the Tatar poets sung of its praise in their works.[82]

A 16th-century account points out that vine-growing in the Crimea was not, however, restricted to the region of Sudak. Rich vineyards were to be found everywhere on the slopes of the hillsides in the peninsula.[83] In a description of the advanced level of viniculture found among the Crimean Tatars at the time of the Russian conquest of the Crimea Khanate, a 19th century Russian source mentions that "Several Crimean villages were literally buried in green gardens; vineyards stretched in several places for miles, for example in Sudak, in the valleys from Alushta to Feodosiia (Russian for Kefe) and on the banks of the Kacha, Belbek and Alma; the sorts of grapes numbered in the dozens; the Tatars perfected the cultivation of vines and the art of grafting to improve grapes."[84] Viniculture was such a vital part of the southern Crimea's economy that the Crimean Khan promulgated laws to regulate this industry and October 3 was considered the official day for commencing vintage.[85]

The Muslim peasants of the southern mountains were especially skilled in the art of viniculture by means of artificial irrigation. According to a 19th century Russian account "the Tatars and Turks were great masters of irrigation. They were able to finesse the smallest stream of sediment filled water and direct it into earthen channels and wide pools...they were able, by means of artery systems, to irrigate gardens and vineyards on the slopes of mountains."[86]

Similarly, the Crimean Tatars' love of another local product gained from the Crimea's soil in later dates, tobacco, is attested by the Tatar saying "He who does not smoke after eating either has no tobacco

[82] V.E. Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 13. pp. 156-157.

[83] Edmond Schutz. "The Tat People in the Crimea." *Acta Orientalia.* 1977. vol. 31. p. 82.

[84] M. Goldenberg. "Krym i Krymskie Tatary." *Vestnik Evropy.* VI. 1883. p. 68.

[85] Peter Pallas. *Travels Through the Southern Provinces of the Russian Empire.* London; T.N. Longman and O. Rees. 1802. p. 399.

[86] M. Voloshin. "Kultura, Isskysstvo, Pamiatniky Kryma." *Zabveniiu ne Podlezhit.* Kazan; Tatarskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo. 1992.p. 62.

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or he has no mind" and the Tatars brought the cultivation of this product to a high level.[87] Exported tobacco produced by the Crimean Tatars was smoked in the Cossack *stanitsas* (settlements) of the Ukraine and in the *chaikhanas* (tea-houses) of Istanbul alike.

Another indigenous product, honey, was collected from mountain pastures and brought down from the mountains in local carts for export from the southern ports. The main consumers of Crimean honey were the Turks and it is interesting to note that Ottoman sultans would accept no honey other than that produced in the Crimean village of Osmançik.[88]

Seen in these socio-economic terms, the Crimean Tatars were certainly more than just "thieving, cattle-lifting, kidnapping neighbors" as they have been described.[89] The very nature of the Crimean Tatars' communal identity and their socio-economic links to the land of the Crimea must, as gradually becomes obvious, be revised.

In the fashion of peasants throughout the world, this people had close ties to the soil of their forebears. The mountain and coastal Tatars of the southern region worked this land in the fashion of their distant ancestors and identified with their village-communes, valleys, and tribal lands as their home soil. Theirs was not a transient relationship with the land of the sort often (and mistakenly) attributed to wandering nomads. This people considered themselves to be tied to the land they tilled. Thus, in their customs, traditional modes of production, and uniquely Crimean culture they could indeed be considered indigenous *Kırımlı*.

While the Nogais of the northern steppe more closely fit the description usually attributed to the 'Crimean Tatar nomadic plunderers' they too had close ties to the ancestral pasture lands they cherished and called their own. The Nogais also worked the soil according to the 18th century account of Peysonell:

> In the area from the mouth of the Danube to the Kuban River, in each horde of the Nogays-the Bucak, Yedisan, Camboyluk and Kuban-the land is distributed by the Crimean khan among the tribes establishing fixed limits. The tribe wanders about in the district allotted to it and has no fixed habitation except in winter when it chooses a place in its territory that appears best protected against the vagaries of the season. When the time of sowing comes, the tribe divides into *aouls* (camps) which go to camp in certain districts in which they proposed to sow.[90]

[87] Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 13. p. 157.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Donald Mackenzie Wallace. *Russia*. New York; Henry Holt and co. 1877. p. 354.

During his visit to the Crimean Khanate just prior to its conquest by Imperial Russia, Baron de Tott observed the Nogais' love of their land writing "The Noguais consider it impossible to traverse the Plains without envying them their possession. You have traveled a great way, said one of these Tatars to me, with whom I was intimate, but did you ever before see a Country like ours?"[91]

The traditional understanding of the Crimean Tatars, even the nomadic Nogai component, and their ties to the Crimea must, as becomes evident, certainly be revised. As Walter Kolarz explains "the Crimean Tatars were no backward people in need of tutelage."[92]

The Crimean Khanate as Seen through the Lenses of Crimean Tatar Nationalism

One must not, however, make the mistake of taking this revision of Crimean Tatar history too far. In Crimean Tatar sources from the late 20th century diaspora, the Giray dynasty, which survived many bloody struggles with the tribal aristocracy (*beys* and lower nobles known as *mirzas*) only with Ottoman assistance, is seen as a 'national' dynasty. All the attributes of a modern nation-state are imparted to this 'homogenous' state which was, in actuality a pre-modern entity based on a delicate balance of power between the Giray dynasty, nomadic Nogais, powerful *beys*, the Ottomans and, on occasion, external factors such as the Circassians and Cossacks who supported various Giray contenders.[93] In addition to the cleavages between the great clans and the khan, the Tats, Yaliboyus and Nogais often had competing political agendas.[94]

[90] Claude Peyssonel. *Traité sur le Commerce de la Mer Noire*. Paris; 1787. p. 302.
[91] Baron de Tott. *Memoirs of Baron de Tott*. London; G. J. Robinson. 1785. vol. I. pp. 47-48.
[92] Walter Kolarz. *Russia and Her Colonies*. New York; Archon Books. 1967. p. 76.
[93] A. Iakobson. op. cit. no. 12. p. 132.
[94] Druzhinina sums up the ethno-political disunity in the Crimea at the time of its annexation stating "The population of the Crimea was not homogenous in national ties. From its ancient past, in the time of the Italian colonization and Mongol invasion and other historical events, the remnants of various peoples were preserved here." Druzhinina. op. cit. no. 72. p. 104.

The unstable Crimean Tatar state also suffered from internecine conflict and most Crimean Khans of the later period were either dethroned by the Ottomans (who in the mid 1600s became the real power behind the Crimean throne), overthrown by the intractable nobility, or killed in struggles for power. It must also be acknowledged that the profits from slave-raiding played an important role in the Crimean Khanate's economy. In many ways, the Crimean Khanate can be compared to the Uzbek Khanate of Khiva which, to a considerable extent, also subsisted on slave raids into the neighboring *Dar al-Harb* (the province of Khorasan in Shiite Persia in particular).

In reconstructing a romanticized Crimean Tatar 'national' state, latter-day Crimean Tatars of the Central Asian and Turkish-Balkan diasporas are also wont to exaggerate the size of the Crimean Khanate's population prior to its 1783 annexation by the Russians. This has the oblique objective of creating a favorable comparison between the Crimea during the glorious time of the Khanate and the later Crimean homeland which was 'de-Tatarized' after the Russian conquest. Tekin Erer's piece entitled "When Will the Sun Arise?" *(Guneş ne Zaman Doğacak?)* is typical of a genre of works and laments:

> In 1784 the population (of the Crimea) was 3.5 million, equal to the population of France at that time. Today where are the Crimeans? Today how many of this 3.5 million population of the Crimea remain?
>
> Look at the Crimea! Look at the Crimean disaster! Look at the Crimean catastrophe! The Crimea's green mountains, hills, pastures and meadows await saying 'When will the sun arise?' In order for the Crimea's true owners to settle and live in the Crimea there is darkness. When will the sun arise in the Crimea?[95]

Another Crimean Tatar-Turkish account sadly commented on the post-Russian annexation migrations that led to the collapse of his people's society claiming "This forced migration lasted for 120 years. This reduced the population, which was 4.5 million during the khanate, to only 300,000."[96] Other Crimean Tatar diaspora sources do not hesitate to place the population of the 17th and 18th century Crimea Peninsula (a predominately steppe land that is smaller than

[95] Tekin Erer. "Guneş ne Zaman Doğacak?" *Emel.* no. 107. July-August. pp. 17-18.

[96] *Emel* editorial committee. "Rusya'nın Kırım Ilkhakının 200 Yıl Dönümü." *Emel.* 129. March-April. 1982. pp. 42-43.

Albania and slightly larger than the U.S. state of New Jersey) at 6 or even 7 million.

Communal histories of lost glory or commemorations of an idealized state destroyed by an enemy have been a hallmark of diaspora cultures since the scattering of the Jews following the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. The lament of a lost homeland is a timeless means of passing on a feeling of identification with a lost place to new generations in exile. Laments of this nature must, however, be accepted with caution by the historian for, all too often, passion and, (especially since the rise of nationalism) political rhetoric inform them. This factor must be taken into account when trying to accurately gauge the size of the migrations to the Ottoman lands that led to the creation of the first Crimean Tatar diaspora. Seen from this perspective, the tales of the lost splendor of the Crimean Khanate can better be understood as a diasporic metaphor for an idealized past that existed prior to this people's expulsion from their 'Eden'.

More reliable sources place the 18th-century population of the Crimean Khanate at somewhere between 400,000 (Gavin Hambly)[97] and 500,000 (Richard Pipes[98], Robert Lyall[99] and Peter Pallas).[100] In his account published a year after the 1783 conquest of the Crimea, Thunmann puts the population of the Crimea at "around 400,000", a number considered "of the greatest accuracy" by historian N. L. Ernst.[101] Arsenii Markevich, one of the most authoritative source on the demography of the Crimea writes:

[97] Gavin Hambly. *Central Asia.* New York; Dell Publishing. 1966. pp. 193-4.

[98] Richard Pipes. *The Formation of the Soviet Union.* Cambridge Mass; Harvard Univ. Press. p. 12.

[99] Robert Lyall. *Travels in Russia, the Krimea, the Caucasus and Georgia.* New York; Arno Press. 1970. (original 1825). p. 345. Lyall puts the population of the Crimea prior to the annexation at "half a million souls" with an army of 40,000 to 50,000. p. 345.

[100] Peter Pallas. *Travels Through the Southern Provinces of the Russian Empire* in 1793 and 1794. London; T.N. Longman and O. Rees. 1802. p. 342. Alan Fisher similarly claims "The best estimates that can be made of their population in the middle of the eighteenth century place the Crimean Tatars at around 500,000." Alan Fisher. "The Crimean Tatars, the USSR, and Turkey." *Soviet Asian Ethnic Frontiers.* New York; Pergamon Press. 1979. p. 4.

[101] Thunmann. *Der Krimische Statt.* Simferopol; Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Krym. ASSR. 1936. p. 15. Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay also claims "At the time of the conquest, according to the most probable estimates, the population of the peninsula was 200,000 and that of the whole khanate, 400,000." Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay. "The Tatars of the Crimea: A Retrospective Survey." *Central Asian Review.* 16, no. 1. 1968. p. 18. n. 9.

> In the Crimean Khanate there was no survey of the population. In his title, the Crimean Khan speaks of 'countless' subjects, but in actuality it was not particularly high and fluctuated between 400,000 and 500,000 souls total, including in that sum all elements of the population.[102]

Modern statistics support these cautious claims. At the end of the populous 20th century, the Crimean Peninsula can scarcely sustain a population of approximately 2.5 million. This large population has been reached only by diverting vast amounts of water to the dry northern steppe of the Crimea (a zone that makes up a full two-thirds of the Crimean Peninsula) from the Dnieper River via a vast series of canals constructed during the Soviet era. This project, known as the North Crimean Canal, has allowed hundreds of thousands of Slavs to settle in and irrigate over 310,000 hectares of land once only thinly inhabited by Nogai-Tatars.[103]

It should also be noted that Stalin and Khrushchev used the vast state resources of the transcontinental Soviet empire to repopulate the post-deportation Crimea with tens of thousands of Slavic inhabitants. In spite their massive, state-wide efforts, which led to the development and rapid growth of large urban centers and industry in the Crimea (with cities like Kerch, Sevastopol and Simferopol that now have populations dwarfing those of villages in the Crimean Khanate), the population of the Crimea at the start of the 21st century is still well below that often ascribed to the pre-modern Crimean Khanate by many in the Crimean Tatar diaspora.

The Final Years of the Independent Crimean Khanate

With a population that did not then exceed half a million, the heterogeneous Crimean Khanate was, by the 18th century certainly no longer a match for the transcontinental Russian Imperium which stretched from Poland to the Pacific. This vast state could field technically advanced armies that dwarfed those of the Crimean Khan who now relied on the logistical problems the Russian army faced

[102] Arsenii Markevich. "Pereseleniia Krymskikh Tatar v Turtsiiu v Sviazi s Dvizheniem Naseleniia v Krymu." *Izvestiia AN SSSR.* series no. 7. no. 4 (1928). p. 377.

[103] David Marples. "Food Versus Ecology: Building the North Crimean Canal." *News from the Ukraine.* no. 3. Jan. 1989. p. 4. and *Robitnycha Hazeta.* Nov. 27, 1988.

in crossing the last remnants of the open steppe to protect the khanate.

What is surprising then is not the fact that the Crimean Khanate did eventually succumb to the might of the Russian Empire, but that it did not do so at an earlier date. For most of the 18th century the isolated Crimean Peninsula lived up to its ancient title, *al-Kırım* (the Fortress), and in Ottoman and Tatar texts it was often known as the *Kırım adası* (the Isle of the Crimea), an appellation that accurately summarizes this 'islanded' community's increasingly enveloped position *vis-à-vis* the encroaching Russian Empire.

Long gone were the days when the Crimean Khan could mount his horse and lead his proud *batirs* (knights) in great raids into the neighboring lands. Although the Crimean Khan Kırım Giray was able to lead a plundering party of Cossacks, Nogais, Tatar clan leaders and Ottoman irregular cavalry into the Russian province of New Serbia (Southern Ukraine), on one last *razzia* (the last great nomadic raid in Europe's history) during the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, this incursion was of little real military value to the Ottomans.

The imbalance in military strength between the modernizing, centralized Russian Empire and the pre-modern Chingisid Khanate of the Crimea had been vividly displayed as early as 1736. In that year a Russian army (led by the skilled General Munnich) traversed the steppes north of the Crimea, forced the khan's northern defenses at Or Kapı (Perekop) and sacked scores of Crimean towns and villages, including the khan's capital of Bahçesaray. According to a later account "The march of Munnich across the beautiful plains of Crimea was marked by the burning of towns and ravages of all sorts."[104] Tales of the destruction wreaked by the Russian army in this campaign haunted the militarily inactive Crimean Tatars for a generation thereafter and few among this people could have reacted with joy when news reached the Crimea in 1768 that the Ottoman Sultan had raised the Standard of the Prophet and had declared *gazavat* (holy war) against their powerful infidel neighbors to the north.

The end of the Crimea's independence was ordained when the Nogai hordes, the khanate's traditional border guards, abandoned the khan and acknowledged Russian suzerainty during the subsequent

[104] H.D. Seymour. *Russia and the Black Sea.* London; John Murray. 1855. p. 28.

1768-1774 war with Russia. The Ottomans and Crimean Tatars had taken it for granted that the Nogais would continue to support their co-religionists against the *Dar al-Harb* but these nomads who had long resented the dominance of the Crimean khans and their Ottoman overlords saw surrender as their only chance for maintaining control of their steppe pastures.[105] The final straw came when Nogais living in several *auls* within the Crimea itself, in the peninsula's northern steppes, followed the lead of their kin on the mainland and recognized Russian rule.[106]

By acknowledging the Tsarina, Catherine II, as their Empress, these last scions of the ancient steppe nomads were accepting the inevitable. The old ways were changing and a new era, personified by the Western-oriented Empress ruling from her baroque Winter Palace on the banks of the River Neva in St Petersburg, had begun. With the annexation of their state in 1783, the fate of the Crimean Tatars was, for the next 134 years, to be decided by the *Ak Padishah* (White Tsar) who ruled from Peter the Great's westward facing capital in the north. The Christian rulers of St. Petersburg at last possessed the strategic *Kirim*-Fortress which was soon to give them control of the Black Sea and western coasts of the Caucasus. The fall of the Crimean Tatar state was thus to be the first 'domino' to fall in the Muslim collapse that was to see the Muslim-dominated Pontic rim cleansed of its ancient Islamic populations (such as the Circassians, Laz, Nogais, Abkhaz, Tatars, Ubykhs and Ajars) and converted into a Christian Slavic land in less than a century.

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[105] Kortepeter. op. cit. no. 18. p. 18.

[106] F. Lashkov. *Shagin Girei. Poslednii Krimskii Khan. Istoricheskii Ocherk.* Kiev; Tipograia Davidenko. 1886. p. 3.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PEARL IN THE TSAR'S CROWN. THE CRIMEAN LAND AND PEOPLE UNDER RUSSIA

Few periods in Crimean history are as hotly contested between the Russians and Crimean Tatars as the 134 years of Russian colonial domination of the peninsula. From the time of the annexation forward the fate of the two peoples has been intertwined and it becomes impossible to understand the Crimean Tatars' contemporary identity without understanding the two nations' differing interpretations of their historical relationship.

For the Russians, the conquest of the homeland of the Crimean Tatars was one of the proudest chapters in their people's history. Russia gained from its historical enemies control of the strategic Crimean Peninsula which was to become the base for one of Russia' proudest national symbols, the Black Sea Fleet. It has been argued in many Russian sources that, following the Crimea's annexation, the primitive Crimean Tatars were exposed to the advances of Western civilization (modern medicines, public education, modern means of communication etc.) by the Russians who increased the region's productivity and level of culture. Where once stifling 'Oriental' backwardness and ignorance prevailed, it has been maintained in Russian sources, Western Enlightenment appeared in the form of Russian soldiers, colonists and benign administrators who ruled over the backward natives with a paternal hand. In annexing the lands of the Crimean Tatars Russia had actually embarked on a *mission civilsatrice*. According to the 1953 Great *Soviet Encyclopedia*:

> The annexation of the Crimea to Russia had tremendous significance for the socio-economic and cultural development of the Crimea. A fundamental change took place in the Crimea. The construction of new cities was begun, roads were laid, they began to introduce higher culture, and to increase the acreage of gardens, viniculture and tobacco.[1]

Nadinskii's discussion of the annexation strikes a similar note and is

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[1] *Bol'shaia Sovetskaiia Entsiklopediia.* vol. 23. Moscow; Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatel'stvo. 1953. p. 552

of great importance for his widely-read history of the Crimea certainly shaped many Russians' perceptions of their historical links to the Crimean Peninsula. A whole generation of Russians who settled on the lands (and often in the very houses) vacated by the exiled Crimean Tatars after the 1944 deportation grew up believing that their people's right to the Crimea was firmly based in history and on their claim to having been the first to make the Crimean Peninsula flourish. The argument put forward by the Russians for their rights to the land was based on what has been described as the argument of superior efficiency and superior culture claims.[2]

The Russians felt that they had a right to the land that stemmed from their introduction of modern agricultural and urban development to this undeveloped, 'sparsely settled', 'nomad-inhabited' region.[3] According to Nadinskii's account:

> The Crimea in no way may be considered a colony, because the Crimean land was from ancient times Russian land, and therefore the annexation of the Crimea to Russia was not the conquest of a foreign land, but was the re-unification and reestablishing of the rights of the Russian people to its own land. The economic development of the Crimea was accomplished by Russians, the towns were built by Russian workers, the fields were tilled in the great majority by Russian.[4]

For the Crimean Tatars of the former Soviet Union and Turkey, however, the year 1783 is a date of national mourning. From this day forward the Crimean Tatars claim their people began a tragic series of migrations to the lands of the Ottoman sultan that saw them become a minority in their own homeland. For the Crimean Tatar diaspora of today the Crimean *anayurt* (motherland) was despoiled by Russian invaders who did not possess the native population's ecological, cultural, or primordial roots to the land. The indigenous Crimean Tatars' roots in the native soil are seen in these accounts as almost mystical and based on the indigenous people's understanding of nature, while the Russians are presented as outsiders who did not (and still do not) have a real understanding of the Crimean land's true nature.

[2] Margaret Moore. "The Territorial Dimension of Self-Determination." *National Self-Determination and Secession* . Oxford; Oxford University Press. 1998. p. 147.

[3] In a similar manner, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, for example, justified his people's displacement of the Palestinian bedouins from the newly formed Israel claiming "The land to which they came, while indeed the Holy Land, was desolate and uninviting land; a land that had been laid waste, thirsty for water, filled with swamps and malaria, lacking in natural resources. And in the land itself there lived another people who neglected the land, but who lived on it." Edward Said and C. Hitchens. *Blaiming the Victims*. London; Verso. 1988. p. 5.

[4] P.N. Nadinskii. *Ocherky po Istorii Kryma*. Simferopol. Krymizadat. 1951. p. 168.

The collapse of Crimean Tatar society, which occurred in the century following the Crimea's annexation, is seen by the Crimean Tatars as a disruption of the natural balance between the native *Kırımlılar* (Crimeans) and the *Kırım*. Crimean Tatars point to 19th century accounts of their homeland prior to the mass disruption of their society to show that they, in comparison to the Russian 'outsiders', respected and interacted with their native land. With the rising international recognition of indigenous peoples' unique rights to their native lands in the late 20th century, the post-Soviet Crimean Tatars increasingly describe themselves not as a national minority, but as the 'indigenous people' of the Crimean soil. Crimean Tatars, both within the former Soviet states and the diaspora lands of the former Ottoman Empire, are also united in their belief that all their people's woes can in fact be traced to the Russians who forced them from the land which had nourished them through the centuries.[5]

From the Crimean Tatar diaspora of Turkey comes the following account of the Russian annexation and its effects on the Crimean Tatars:

> As a result of this annexation a great disaster fell on the Crimean Turk-Tatars: Artistic and cultural monuments were destroyed. The land, property and possessions were taken from the peoples' hands and given to Russian generals, princes and emigrants. Muslim scientists and religious figures were imprisoned and exiled.[6]

As becomes obvious from these diametrically opposed accounts, the history of Russian rule in the lands of the Crimean Tatars is complex and, as an analysis of the Russian colonial period will show, both Soviet and Crimean Tatar historical accounts have some claim to validity.

[5] Refat Chubarov, Deputy Chairman of the Crimean Tatars' post-Soviet parliament in the Crimea (the *Milli Mejlis*), bluntly stated in a 1997 interview "practically every bloody page in our history is related to the Russian empire." Refat Chubarov. "Krymskotatarskaia Problema v Zerkale Ukrainskoi Pressy." *Avdet* July 14, 1997. p. 3.

[6] 'Emel editorial committee'. "Rusya'nın Kırım Ilkhakının 200 Yıl Dönümü." *Emel*. 129. March-April. 1982. pp. 42-43.

Russian Attempts to Establish a Crimean Vassal State

When the Tsarist government annexed the Crimean Khanate in 1783, it found itself ruling over a heterogeneous collection of Nogai nomads, Tat mountaineers, and Yaliboyu coastal-dwellers (of the khan's subjects only the redoubtable Circassians of the Caucasus evaded Russian rule) who were further subdivided into powerful clans headed by hereditary *beys*. The Crimean people based their identities on a series of overlapping loyalties given to their clan, ruling khan, powerful Muslim *ulema* (clergy), the Ottoman Sultan and, as shall be demonstrated, to their sub-ethnic group.

As the new rulers of this conquered province of the *Dar al-Islam* were to discover, the traditions of Islam and hundreds of years of customary-tribal law *(adat)* shaped this divided people's view of the world. That the conquerors were to have a difficult time in understanding and governing this ancient people, whose traditional way of life differed so much from their own, became obvious in the strange years between the initial Russian conquest of the Crimea in 1771 and the year of its annexation in 1783.

As early as 1771, a Russian army headed by General Dologrukii had defeated the combined Ottoman-Tatar force defending the Crimea. All major Crimean cities, including Kefe, Bahçesaray, and Gozleve, had been seized by the Russians and the Ottoman governor of Kefe had been sent fleeing to Istanbul. The ability of the Russian army to soundly defeat the Ottomans in the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, even on its own territories in the Balkans, was also being vividly demonstrated as the anachronistic Ottoman *janissaries* ('slave' infantry) were rolled back by Catherine's brilliantly-led and well-equipped, modern armies.

After three hundred years of conflict with the Crimean Tatars, this people's devastated land lay supine before the Tsarina at a rather early date in the war. Given the superiority of the Russian military position, Catherine *should* have immediately annexed this land which had long been a thorn in the side of Russia, but she did not. Rather, the Empress embarked on an 11 year state building project which aimed to create a semi-independent Crimean Khanate under Russian aegis, as opposed to the previous pro-Ottoman arrangement. This independence was accepted by the Crimean Tatars on September 19, 1771 when the Shirin *bey* and the heads of all the khanate's leading clans and the Nogai hordes held one of the last tribal *kurultays* in Crimean history. In this extraordinary clan gathering the *Karachi Beys* and lower *mirzas* met on the cliffs of Ak Kaya (White Rock, the traditional site of the ancient Crimean clan-gatherings overlooking Karasu Bazar) and recognized Imperial Russia as their ally and provider of their independence.

In summarizing the confusion in understanding the Tsarina's motives for attempting to create an independent Crimean Tatar state Alan Fisher writes "Why Catherine II, in the face of overwhelming victory over both the Ottomans and the Tatars, did not press for annexation of the khanate is one of the major questions of Crimean history."[7] It cannot be precluded that the Tsarina, who prided herself on being a ruler in the Enlightened tradition, sought to preserve the unique Crimean state by establishing a protectorate over the Crimea rather than absorbing it directly.

Regardless of her motives, the Empress embarked on a period of state building that presaged later Tsarist constructions of vassal states in the conquered Central Asian Khanates of Khokand and Khiva and the Emirate of Bukhara.[8] In the year 1774, the Ottoman Porte acknowledged Russia's conquest of the Crimea and the two governments signed an agreement in the town of Küçük Kaynarca (located in the Bulgarian Dobruca) establishing the Crimea as an independent buffer state.[9] The Russians occupied certain key sites in and around the Crimea (such as the Ottoman fortresses of Yeni Kale, Kerch, and Kinburn) and, in time-honored Ottoman fashion, attempted to have their own Giray candidates placed on the Crimea's throne.

In this endeavor the Russians found themselves constantly facing rebellion from the *ulema* who were pro-Ottoman and from the clan *beys* who fought to preserve their own tribal-political prerogatives.[10]

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[7] Alan Fisher. *The Crimean Tatars*. Stanford; Hoover Inst. Press. 1978. p. 58.

[8] A love affair with a Crimean candidate for the pro-Russian Crimean throne, Şahin Giray, has also been suggested as a motive.

[9] According to Edward Weisband "The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (July 21, 1774) was the most humiliating the Sublime Porte had ever been forced to sign, for the Ottomans were forced, for the first time, to concede to the despised *gavurs* (infidels) a section of the *Dar al-Islam*." Edward Weisband. *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1943-1945. Small State Diplomacy and Great Power Politics*. Princeton; Princeton Univ. Press. 1973. p. 211.

[10] In his article on this period, Fisher further writes of the Russians "They did not take into consideration the real disunity within the Khanate, the vast difference between the settled Crimean Tatars and the nomadic Nogais, the conflicts

A client ruler who was (for a short time) acceptable to most parties was eventually found in Khan Şahin Giray, who appears to have not only recognized Russia's *de facto* dominant position in the Crimea, but to have modeled himself on the Russian modernizer, Tsar Peter the Great.

Şahin Giray's efforts to create a modern, centralized khanate based on the Russian model may stem from his experiences in Europe. Born in the city of Edirne in Ottoman Rumelia (the former Ottoman capital in what is today European Turkey, i.e. Adrianople), a center for the Crimean Tatar diaspora in the Balkans, this reforming khan studied in Venice and spoke both Italian and Greek.[11] Like the great Russian Tsar he sought to emulate, Şahin sought to centralize his state and remold it on modern patterns then prevalent in Europe. Among the steps taken in this process was the transfer of the Crimean capital to the port of Kefe (the Ottoman province on the south had been granted to the Khan by the Russians after 1774) with the aim of imitating Peter's transfer of the Russian capital from the old conservative capital of Moscow to the West-facing port of St. Petersburg.

Like the Westernizing Tsar, Şahin Giray also sought to overcome traditionally centrifugal sources of military strength in his state, which were based on the *beys'* tribal militias, by creating a Europeanized infantry division equipped with modern weapons and uniforms to support the central government. Şahin sought to weaken the Crimean clan chieftains by dividing the Crimea into six provinces headed by officials known as *kaimakams* and further dividing these provinces into fourty four judicial districts headed by Islamic judges known as *kadis*.[12]

Şahin appears to have enjoyed the full support of the Tsarina, who poured Russian gold into the Crimea to support the Khan in his state-building project, but the Crimean forces of Islamic conservatism (the pro-Ottoman *ulema*) and tribalism (the hereditary *beys*) fought the khan every step of the way. General Rumianstev, the hero of the 1768-1774 Russo-Turkish War, wrote of the situation in the Crimea at

between the authority of the Khan and the power of the large noble families." Alan Fisher. "Şahin Girey, the Reformer Khan and the Russian Annexation of the Crimea." *Jahrbücher für Geschicthe Osteuropas.* 1967. p. 342.

[11] F. Lashkov. *Shagin' Girey. Poslednii Krimskii Khan. Istoricheskii Ocherk.* Kiev; Tipografiia A. Davidenko. 1886. pp. 2-3.

[12] Ibid. p. 22.

this time "As concerns the qualities and disposition of the Tatar people, there is little reason to expect them to remain at peace and make proper use of their freedom and independence in the near future" for the Tatars were "filled with utter disgust for all benefits associated with her majesty and would never abandon their desire for submission to the Porte as before."[13]

The growing Crimean Tatar diaspora community in Istanbul played the time-honored role of an exiled leadership and successfully lobbied the Ottoman government to support efforts to liberate their homeland from the Russian infidels and their khan. Dissident exile groups also used the nearby Ottoman territory of Circassia as a staging ground for launching repeated coup attempts against Şahin Giray's unpopular government.[14] The exiled leadership's calls for *jihad* against the 'infidel' Khan appear to have had great appeal among this would-be-Peter the Great's traditionalist subjects. The Crimean Tatars of this period it seems were mainly interested in preserving their tribal prerogatives and fighting against the centralizing policies of the reformer Khan whose programs threatened traditionalist society.

Efforts by the Ottoman government, tribal *beys* and *ulema* to destabilize the government of Şahin Giray were all too successful and, after spending a fortune on interventions designed to prop up the Khan, the Russians began to work on plans to annex the troublesome border state directly. In final analysis, the divided Muslim population of the Crimea was, at this early stage in history, unable to rally around a shared sense of *Kırım Tatarlık* (Crimean Tatarness) at the expense of their regional, tribal and religious affiliations.

The Russian Annexation of the Crimean Khanate

The Russian prince Grigorii Potemkin was influential in convincing the Tsarina to end her increasingly costly efforts to forge a stable state among the quarrelsome Crimean Tatars. In urging the Empress to annex the peninsula, Potemkin's words are eerily similar to Prince Gorchakov's memorandum a century later declaring Russia's

[13] Sergei Soloviev. *History of Russia. The Rule of Catherine the Great.* vol. 48. Gulf Breeze Fla.; Academic International Press; 1991. p. 170.

[14] Alan Fisher. "Şahin Girey, the Reformer Khan." *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas.* no. 15, 1967. p. 344.

right to annex the unstable Uzbek states of Central Asia. Potemkin wrote to Catherine saying:

> Look what others have acquired without opposition: France took Corsica; the Austrians, without war, took more from the Turks in Moldavia than we did. There are no powers in Europe that would not divide Asia, Africa, and America among themselves. The acquisition of the Crimea can neither strengthen nor enrich you, but it will give you security. It will be a heavy blow, to be sure, but to whom? To the Turks![15]

In 1783, Catherine finally annexed the Crimean Khanate and the last Crimean Khan eventually made his way to the Ottoman Empire where, not surprisingly, this contender who dreamed of creating a Western (implicitly Christian) style state was executed on the island of Rhodes as a traitor to Islam and the Ottoman state.

Far from being recognized as a failed 'founding father' of the Crimean Tatar nation, Şahin Giray has since been painted in Crimean Tatar national histories as a traitor to his people. This popular Crimea Tatar image of Şahin Giray reflects 18th and 19th century notions of communal identification based on Islam and tribal affiliation, both of which were threatened by the Khan's attempts to create a Crimean state on the model of centralized Russia.

This portrayal of the doomed Khan, however, overlooks the fact that it was Şahin Giray who offered the fractious Crimean Tatars their only practical alternative to direct rule by Russia. With their attachments to Islam, loyalty to their tribal *beys* , and their instinctive distrust of central authority (especially one bolstered by infidels) the Crimean Tatars' traditionalist leaders showed themselves to be unable to give their loyalty to anything as nebulous as a 'Crimean Tatar' state and in the process doomed their people to direct Russian rule.

Both the Crimean Tatars and the Ottomans continued to identify themselves in traditional Islamic terms in this early period and this prevented the politicization of their ethnicity. Sultan Selim III (whose efforts to create a *Nizam-i Cedid*, 'New Order Army' may have been inspired by Şahin Giray's similar efforts), for example, felt it was his duty as *Caliph* ('Successor to Mohammed', i.e. head of the Sunni Muslim community) to liberate the Crimean Muslims from

[15] Sergei Soloviev. "Istoriia Padeniia Pol'shi." *Sobranie Sochinenii* . S.M. Solov'eva. St. Petersburg; Obshchestvennaia Pol'za. 1900. pp. 102-103.

infidel rule.[16] According to one source, Selim felt, as earlier sultans did, that he "would rather lose Constantinople itself than the country of his loyal Tatars."[17] The Sultan continued his forces' involvement in the 1787-1792 Russo-Turkish War, for the most part, to free the Crimea from infidel rule, but the outdated Ottoman army was repeatedly defeated on the field of battle by the modern Russian army. With the signing of the Treaty of Yassy in 1792 acknowledging this defeat, all hopes for regaining the land of the Crimean Muslims were ended.

In analyzing Catherine II's treatment of the Crimean Tatars after the Crimea's annexation, Lazzerini cautions "we ought to note that four invasions of the peninsula by Russian troops were required between 1771 and 1782 before the empress reluctantly consented to the region's annexation and ended her years of hopeful experimentation with alternative solutions to the border problem."[18] The terminology of Catherine's 1783 *ukaz* (edict) announcing the annexation of the Crimean Khanate reflected her enlightened views towards the Crimea's Muslim population, their culture and their religion:

> In proclaiming to the inhabitants of these regions, through this our Imperial manifesto, this change in their way of life, we make a sacred and unshakable promise on behalf of ourselves and our successors upon the throne to maintain them on a basis of equality with our hereditary subjects and to preserve and defend their persons, property, temples, and ancestral faith, and may the unhindered practices of their faith, with all its lawful ceremonies remain inviolable; finally, to allow each class among them all those rights and privileges enjoyed by the corresponding classes in Russia.[19]

[16] Stanford Shaw. *Between the Old and New. The Ottoman Empire Under Sultan Selim II, 1789-1807*. Cambridge; Harvard Univ. Press. 1971. p. 193.

[17] Karl Roider. *The Reluctant Ally, Austria's Policy in the Austro-Turkish War 1737-1739*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana Univ. State Press, 1972. p. 107.

[18] Edward Lazzerini. "The Crimea Under Russian Rule. 1783 to the Great Reforms." *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*. ed. Michael Rywkin. London; Mansell Publishing. 1988. p. 124. Fisher supports the notion that Catherine II was genuine in her attempts to create a state for the obstreperous Crimean Tatars and writes "The evidence suggests that Catherine tried desperately to create and sustain the Crimea as an independent state following the Russo-Turkish war of 1774 and that it was only after every possible means (in Russian eyes) of establishing Şahin Girey as an autocratic and independent sovereign had been exhausted that Catherine carried out 'the final solution'." Alan Fisher. "Şahin Girey, the Reformer Khan and the Russian Annexation of the Crimea." *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*. vol. 15. 1967. p. 342.

[19] George Vernadsky et. al. editor. *A Source Book for Russian History from Early Times to 1917*. vol. 2. New Haven; Yale Univ. Press. 1972. p. 412.

This decree differs markedly from those issued by Tsar Ivan IV (The Terrible) proclaiming his conquest of the Tatar Khanate of Kazan in 1552 and reflects the transformation of Russia from a Christian crusader state of Ivan's time to a multi-national colonial empire.[20]

By comparison, Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup argue that enlightened Tsarina Catherine II was personally interested in Islam and believed that it was a reasonable religion.[21] Bennigsen refutes the wide spread notion that the Russian government attempted a policy of forced Christianization in the Crimea of the sort practiced by successive Russian governments in the Volga region from the 16th to the 19th centuries. According to Bennigsen:

> No systematic effort of assimilation was attempted in the Crimea. A few rare representatives of the Crimean aristocracy-the princes Shirinskii, for example-voluntarily converted to Christianity; but such cases were exceptional. The Russian authorities were in fact opposed to any Christian proselytism, and the Orthodox missions were refused the right to operate in the Crimea.[22]

The Crimean Tatars' energetic resistance to Russian conquest up to 1774 had perhaps earned them a breathing space and the annexation of the Crimea took place during one of the most liberal periods in Russian history. The 19th century Russian conquest of the Muslim peoples of the Caucasus was by contrast a brutal process marked by mass expulsion of hostile mountain populations, scorched earth tactics, slaughter and a century of bloody warfare...the effects of which can still be felt in the region today. Anti-Russian accounts that claim that the Russians launched an all-out assault on Crimean Tatar society after 1783 ignore the fact that, in the initial stages at least, the Russian absorption of the Crimea was a rather humane affair and there was no overtly anti-Islamic policy in this region.[23]

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[20] A 16th century description of the Russian conquest of the Kazan states "And with God's grace and because of the great faith of the Orthodox Tsar Ivan Vasil'evich, and on account of his heart's desire, God turned over to him the godless Kazan Tatars, and our pious Sovereign destroyed their Muslim faith, and he demolished their mosques, and he enlightened with his piety their dark places." Alan Fisher. "Muscovite-Ottoman Relations in the Sixteenth Centuries." *Humaniora Islamica*. I (1973). p. 209.

[21] Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup. *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State*. New York; St. Martin's Press. 1993. pp. 17-18.

[22] Alexandre Bennigsen. "The Muslims of European Russia and the Caucasus." *Russia and Asia. Essays on the Influence of Russia and Asian Peoples*. ed. Wayne Vucinich. Stanford; Hoover Inst. Press. 1972. p.147.

[23] Amir Taheri. *Crescent in a Red Sky. The Future of Islam in the Soviet Union*. London; Hutchinson. 1989. p. 45.

18th Century Russian Colonial Policies Towards the Crimean Tatars

Having belatedly annexed the Crimea and divided the Khanate's territories into three districts (Kherson, Ekaterinoslav and the Tauride) with a minimum of resistance from the war-weary Crimean Tatars, the Tsarist officials began the daunting task of bringing their former enemies into the Russian body politic. The two former Nogai inhabited provinces situated north of the Crimea (Kherson and Ekaterinoslav), were only lightly settled by Nogai nomads and became ordinary Russian provinces, while the Tauride *Guberniia* (province), which consisted of the Crimean Peninsula proper, was initially administered by a dual Russian-Tatar administration. This temporary administration was an attempt to ease the transition of a hostile Muslim population into the Russian Empire and, in the process, co-opt important indigenous Tatar leaders.

In some respects this effort was successful. Many Crimean Tatar landowners and officials from the previous khan's administration became assimilated into the Russian *dvorianstvo* (nobility). The prominent *beys* of the Shirin, Mansur and Yashlav clans and scores of *mirzas* (lower nobles), for example, were granted nobility status and given a greater degree of control over the previously free Crimean Tatar peasantry still living in village communes or on shared grazing land. These traditional community leaders quickly came to identify not with the common Crimean Tatar peasants, but with their fellow aristocrats (Russian or Tatar), all of whom owed their status and wealth to Russian authority.

As a result the Crimean Tatars proved to be extremely docile Russian subjects. Although there was a revolt in 1808 in Bahçesaray and another in 1880, these were of limited significance. Compared to the Muslim peoples of the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Volga, the Crimean Tatars were relatively passive. This was in part due to the fact that the Crimean Tatars' indigenous leadership had little interest in rebelling against the regime that granted them status and privileges.

In return for their loyalty, the Crimean Tatar aristocracy was given large land grants along with the Russian nobility, which began to divide the Crimea among themselves soon after annexation. It was at this time that Russia's new colonial rulers began to appreciate the value of the Crimean Tatar peasant class as well as that of the Crimean Tatar aristocracy. According to one account "The rulers

of the Crimea, poorly knowing the peculiarities of the southern village economy, for several years ruined the economy of the region to a considerable degree, this caused an emigration of such scale that alarm filled the Russian authorities themselves."[24] After an initial period, the local Tatar peasants helped the Russians adapt to the Crimea's unique environmental conditions by teaching them, for example, how to: store grain in *yamas* (underground, air tight grain storage bins), how to utilize *sabans* (the local, iron tipped heavy plough designed for the steppe's hard soil), and how to grow grain in the Crimea's dry steppe and mountain conditions.[25] The Crimean Tatars thus made themselves indispensable to the new rulers of the Crimea who did not initially displace them as they adapted to this new land.

While huge swaths of land belonging to the deposed Khan (*Khanlık* lands), the heir to throne (*Kalgalık* lands), and properties belonging to departed Ottoman officials were granted to high Russian officials and the local Tatar aristocracy, Catherine II declared that the villages of Bahçesaray and Karasubazar were to remain Crimean Tatar enclaves. The Empress forbade mass Russian settlement in these traditional Muslim areas. Similarly, in recognition of the Muslim peasants' traditional independence, the Crimean Tatars were not officially transformed into serfs and were considered to be legally free, unlike serfs in Russia proper.

Many of the governors of the Tauride province continued Catherine II's enlightened policies towards the Crimean Tatars and this Muslim peasant class often found concerned protectors in these officials. No Crimean governor, however, was as respected by the Empire's new Muslim subjects as Prince Michael Vorontsov (1782-1856). During his tenure as Governor-General of the South Ukrainian Province of New Russia (which included the Crimea) from 1828-54, for example, Vorontsov appears to have respected Crimean Tatar culture. Vorontsov built a macadamized road along the southern littoral linking the previously isolated Tatar hamlets of this region

[24] V.E. Vozgrin. *Istoricheskie Sud'by Krymskikh Tatar.* Moscow; Mysl'. 1992. p. 278. Levitskii states that "this land, consisting of vast expanses, often fell into the hands of people who did not desire or were unable to usefully extract from it and a large portion of it lay unworked or was given for an agreed upon sum or awarded to the Tatar population." G. I. Levitskii. "Pereselenie Krymskikh Tatar iz Kryma v Turtsiiu." *Vestnik Evropy.* no. 10. 1882. p. 599.

[25] David Lynch. *The Conquest, Settlement and Initial Development of New Russia.* New Haven; Yale Univ. Press. 1965. pp. 121-122.

from Alushta to Foros on the southernmost point of the Crimea, contributed money for the upkeep of the Khan Saray complex and protected Crimean Tatar rights.

Most importantly, Vorontsov defended the rights of Crimean Tatar peasants to their land. In a typical ruling, Vorontsov defended the rights of the Tatars of the Baidar Valley in the southern Crimea against the efforts by a particularly rapacious Russian *pomeshchik* (large landowner) to acquire their land in the following terms:

> To ride roughshod over native property rights would be to declare formally that the doors of justice are closed to all who are poor and to all who are ignorant...If it is true that our laws have not been able to protect the Russian serf peasant from the tyranny of the landlord, all the more reason why the free agriculturist of the Crimea should have the means of recourse to justice of the Sovereign in order to defend his rights and save himself from the hardest of all oppressions, that of taking away that which he owns, that with which he makes a living.
>
> It would only be a cruel joke if the government were actually to undertake to drive the Tatar farmers of the Baidar Valley out of their homes and lands. For these are political questions, decided only after long years, according to the good conduct and loyalty of the Tatars, and according to the wisdom of our government.[26]

As with the contemporary colonial governments of the French, Dutch, and English, Vorontsov and other Russian governors of the Crimea also introduced the indigenous Tatar population of the Crimea to Western scientific advances.[27]

In the Crimean context, constructive aspects of Russian colonial rule could be found on many levels. It was the Russian colonial administration, for example, that ended the endemic civil warfare in Crimean Tatar society between contenders for the throne and tribal factions that had done so much to destabilize Crimean society in the hundred years prior to the Russian annexation. A century later, in 1875, a railroad line was extended to the Crimea facilitating the movement of agricultural goods from the Tauride Province to markets in Russia proper. In the 1870s the telegraph was also

[26] Anthony Rhinelander. *Prince Michael Vorontsov. Viceroy to the Tsar.* London; McGill-Queens University Press. 1990. p. 90.

[27] Thomas Barret has pointed out that, on Russia's southern frontier, all too often social history focuses mainly on the defeated ethnic groups and their "repression, resistance, extinction and emigration" while ignoring the constructive aspects of Russian colonial rule. Thomas Barret. "The Frontiers of the North Caucasus." *Slavic Review.* Fall 1995. p 581.

extended to the Crimea, post-houses were built, museums were opened in Kaffa-Feodosiia and Kerch and, with the spread of the Russian language, the Crimean Tatar intelligentsia were given a linguistic vehicle for accessing the writings of Western civilization. Western medical advances were also brought to the region to fight diseases such as small pox. An English visitor to the Crimea, for example, recorded "The Russian Government has done a great deal to encourage vaccination, and to facilitate the operation; but the Tatars have a prejudice against it, and the Russians do not trouble themselves about it unless the medical man, lancet in hand, presents himself at their cottages for the purpose."[28]

Perhaps the most notable example of Russian influence in the Crimea was the birth of new cities in the peninsula which (as was vogue for the time) were given ancient Greek names. While the older ports, such as Kefe (renamed Feodosiia by the Russian government) and Gozleve (Russian, Evpatoriia) declined rapidly under the Russians, the Tatar village of Ak Mecit, for example, was soon overwhelmed by the construction of a new governmental center known by the Russian government as Simferopol. Simferopol, which means 'The Gathering Place,' was a link to the Crimea's Greek history and, like the province's name, the Tauride, stressed the peninsula's classical past rather than its despised Tatar-Muslim heritage.

The insignificant Tatar village of Yalta on the southern coast was also developed by Prince Vorontsov and, by the mid 19th century, had become the center of the southern coast (soon to be known as the 'Russian Riviera') and a popular resort destination for the Russian aristocracy. None of the aforementioned cities, however, compared in importance to the Russian naval port of Sevastopol established on the south-west coast of the Crimea on the site of the small Tatar village of Ak Yar (White Precipice). Counted among the finest ports in Europe, the Russian naval base at Sevastopol soon became Russia's primary bastion for projecting naval power into the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

In a short time then, Crimean Peninsula had certainly earned its title which it is given in Russian sources 'The Pearl in the Tsar's Crown.'

As this was the period of the Enlightenment, representatives from

[28] Andrew Wilson. *The Crimea: Its Towns and Inhabitants*. London; Partridge and Co. 1855. p. 120.

Russia's growing community of scientists and academicians traveled to the Empire's latest acquisition to study its fauna, topography, geology, and the culture of its indigenous population.[29] This was also a splendid opportunity for foreigners to visit the lands of 'Crim Tatary', a land that had, until the Russian conquest, been a virtual *terra incognita* in the West. According to a 19th century account "The capture of the Crimea excited the attention of all Europe" and many Westerners also brought word of the Crimea to their countrymen.[30]

The travelogues of these 18th and 19th century visitors provide the historian with unique insight into the culture, identity and ties to the Crimean land found among the Crimean Tatar peasants prior to their mass displacements. All too frequently diaspora groups are studied only in their places of dispersion and no effort is made to explore their culture *in situ*. In many cases it is the traditions and links to land formed in the homeland *prior* to dispersion that shape a diasporic community's identity. In the case of the Crimean Tatars, a background survey of this people's ties to their homeland is essential for understanding their migration patterns (during the Imperial period and in the post-Soviet setting) and sense of attachment to the Crimea in the Central Asian, Balkan and Turkish diasporas.

The invaluable descriptions of the Crimea, its topography, and climate painted in this period also provide a starting point for understanding the ways in which the Crimea's native population was shaped by the various terrains of the Crimean Peninsula. It is only by understanding the real nature of the various Crimean landscapes and the Crimean Tatars' way of life on the peninsula that one can understand the process whereby the memory of this home place shaped this people's identity in the diaspora context. It is these communal memories of the Crimea's nature and landscape which have caused the Crimean Tatar diaspora to think of itself as the personification of the Crimean motherland's nature while viewing all others as 'intruders.' A reconstruction of the land of the Crimean Tatars through the eyes of 18th and 19th century contemporaries will demonstrate the ways in which the Crimean Tatars' communal identity, modes of village production and culture were forged by their

[29] E. I. Druzhinina. *Severnoe Prichernomor'e*. Moscow; Akademiia Nauk. 1959. pp. 16-20.

[30] Edward Clarke. *Travels in Various Countries of Europe and Asia. Part one. Russia, Tahtary and Turkey*. London; T. Cadell and W. Davies. 1816. p. 173.

ties to a land longingly described in songs from the exile as the beloved *Yeşil Ada* ('Green Isle').

The Crimean Çöl. The Homeland of the Nogais

For most travelers arriving to the Crimea from the north via the Ukrainian mainland it should be stated that the Crimea hardly resembled the 'Green Isle' commemorated in poems and songs by the Crimean Tatar poets of the diaspora. After passing through the narrow, five-mile wide entrance to the Crimea at the Perekop isthmus (site of the old frontier fortress of Or Kapı), the Crimean plain is simply a dreary continuation of the dry south Ukrainian steppe known to the Nogai nomads as the Çöl (Steppe). The only break in the monotony as the traveler traversed this endless plain was the sight of an occasional Nogai herder and his *taboon* (herd) of steppe ponies, flocks of sheep and camels or fields of grain grown by Nogai farmers.[31] Despite its monotonous aspect, this dry plain, with its bitter winter blizzards and hot summers, was a great source of wealth for the Crimean gentry, whose herds grazed at large on its grassy expanses, and for Nogai peasants who used artificial irrigation to grow crops here.

Edward Clarke, a prominent English visitor to the peninsula in the mid 19th century wrote of this plain "The principle property of the Tahtar gentlemen consists in cattle. Thousands are seen in the steppes, and they are often the property of a single man; among them we noticed many hundred camels."[32]

In many respects the Nogai herders and farmers of the Pontic steppe had more in common with their close Kipchak kin, the Kazakhs (who had a similar culture and were also descended from the Golden Horde), than with the Tats of the southern Crimea. Linguistically, culturally, and anthropologically, the Nogais were in fact hard to delineate from the Kazakhs who assimilated many Nogai in the northern Caspian region during the 17th and 18th centuries.

While this westernmost remnant of the Eurasian nomad hordes had begun to be forcefully settled by the early 19th century by

[31] Peter Pallas. *Travels Through the Southern Provnices of the Russian Empire, 1793-1794*. London; T.N. Longman and O. Rees. 1802. p. 452.
[32] Edward Clarke. op. cit. no. 30. 1826. p. 138.

Russian officials who distrusted their 'shiftless' way of life, the Nogais of this region continued to cherish their independence and to maintain their steppe customs. Visitors to the Nogai *auls* (simple villages of the plain) found that this people, like the native Indian tribes of the American plains whose way of life so closely resembled their own, maintained an intense self-pride and a simplicity in lifestyle that many Romanticists found to be untarnished by the vices of 'corrupt' civilization.[33] Hommaire de Hell, a 19th century witness to the Nogais' way of life and also mentions the lack of a sense of unity among the Tats and Nogais:

> One of the most striking characteristics of these (Nogai) Tatars is their excessive vanity with regard to everything that concerns the nobility of their ancestors. It shows itself not only toward strangers, but also in their dealings with each other. They profess likewise the most profound contempt for the Persians, the Turks and even the mountain Tatars of the Crimea, and deem it a dishonor to intermarry with those nations.[34]

In his account of the Nogais dating to just prior to the Russian Revolution, Harry de Windt, mentions that, even at this late date, the Nogais continued to maintain customs and a way of life that differentiated them from their kin on the south Crimean coast:

> In these northern districts Tartars are chiefly met with who differ essentially from those inhabiting the southern coast, the former being rough, but kindly people, of the Mongolian type, mainly employed in the breeding of horses, sheep and cattle, while those of the littoral, having in other days freely interbred with the Greeks and Genoese, are more refined in appearance and manner, and also more indolent, probably by reason of the more sunny and enervating climate.[35]

The Yaila. The Homeland of the Mountain Tats

While the Nogais called the north Crimean plain home, travelers to the south encountered a Tatar sub-ethnie that was forged not on the

[33] According to Scott's account "the Noguais have a tolerable amount of self-esteem, believing themselves superior to most other races." Charles Scott. *The Baltic, the Black Sea and the Crimea*. London; Richard Bentley. 1854. p. 193.
[34] Hommaire de Hell. *Travels in the Steppes of the Caspian Sea, the Crimea and the Caucasus*. London; Chapman and Hall. 1847. p. 272.
[35] Harry de Windt. *Russia as I Know It*. Philadelphia; J.B. Lippincott co. 1917. p. 187.

open plains, but in the green mountains and hills of the south. As one approaches the Crimean capital of Simferopol (Ak Mecit) the ground rises near the Salgir River and the foothills of the south appear, with the massive Çadır Dağ (Tatar 'Tent Mountain') looming behind them. Peter Pallas, perhaps the most imminent scholar to visit and actually live in the Crimea in the period directly following peninsula's annexation, described this transition in terrain from the steppe to the mountains as follows "Nothing can be conceived more gratifying, after an irksome journey over barren and uniform plains, than a view of the mountains, and a country presenting hills and beautifully variegated woods and occasionally intersected by the whimsical meanders of rivulets."[36]

While the steppe makes up two-thirds of the Crimea, it was the southern mountains and hills that were considered the homeland of the greater portion of the Crimea's Tatar population. Visitors to this mountainous land provide insightful descriptions of the inhabitants of this region that point to the ancient roots of this Pontic people and confirm their agrarian ties to its soil. These accounts also paint a picture of a people who, in spite of their shared Turco-Islamic heritage with the Nogais, continued to maintain strong communal identifications with their Tat sub-ethnic groupings and micro-homelands. In his account from just prior to the Crimean War, Charles Scott, for example, clearly delineates the Nogais from the Tats writing:

> The Crim Tatars are divided into two classes, those of the plain and those of the mountains. Not only do these differ in habits and occupation, but in race; the former are scattered over the steppe of the northern part of the peninsula, cultivating land and breeding cattle and horses, and building rude houses of unburnt clay. They bear on their visages the characteristics of the Mongols.
>
> The latter follow many industrial arts, are fond of gardening, cultivate tobacco, flax and the vine; and display the physiognomies of the Caucasian race. They have more beard than the others, and are above the middle height. They are supposed to be a mixture of races who have inhabited the Crimea, and resemble the Turks, or other Europeans, many of them having brown hair and fair complexions. They are refined in manner, and dignified in bearing, naturally polite and hospitable, honest in dealing, and frugal in eating.[37]

[36] Peter Pallas. *Travels in 18th Century Russia.* London; Studio Editions. 1990. pp. 135-136.

[37] Charles Scott.op. cit. no. 33. p. 306.

As late as the mid-19th century then, the Crimean Tatars of the steppe and those of the south differed in their dialect, physiognomy, means of production and in their views of one another. Pallas, for example, writes that the Nogais did not consider the Tats to be true descendants of their race and called them "by the contemptuous name of Tat."[38] In his description of the Tatars of the Crimean mountains, another 19th century English source, H.D. Seymour, informs us that:

> It is farther remarkable that the hair and beards of these mountaineers are almost uniformly light reddish or even flaxen; a circumstance seldom occurring in the Crimea. It is certain all the inhabitants who at present occupy the villages situated on the southern coast, though regarded as Tatars, are nevertheless the offspring of other nations, who have either landed here or have been driven thither from the interior, and who were strangers to the later race, but especially to that of the Mongols: hence the original natives of Crim Tatary consider them as aliens, and point them out by the contemptible name of Tat.[39]

In his 19th century account F. A. Fedorov writes:

> The Crimean Tatars should be divided into two groups, the mountain and steppe Tatars. The essence of the mountain people was intermixed with the ancient inhabitants of the Tauride, with the Goths and the Greeks. They are in general of good height, slender and dark haired; their features are regular, their physiognomy and carriage are expressive, they are free and generous in their treatment and in their speech they are thoughtful and sensible.[40]

19th century descriptions of the mountain Tatars frequently delineate the mountain Tatars of the Crimea from the Volga Tatars as well as the Nogais. O. Voroponov wrote of these mountain Tatars "There was not apparent among them the wide, high cheek bones with narrow eyes which you constantly meet among the Tatars close to the Volga. On the contrary, here there was the oblong face and straight, long nose, i.e. that which is reminiscent of the Aryan tribes."[41]

This is an important distinction not lost on the Crimean Tatars of the Soviet exile period who fought a long battle with the Soviet

[38] Pallas op. cit. no. 31. p. 346.

[39] H.D. Seymour. *Russia on the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.* London; John Murray. 1885. p. 203.

[40] F.A. Feodorov. *Krym s Sevastopolem Baliklavoiu.* St. Petersburg; 1855. p. 37.

[41] O. Voroponov. "Sredi Krymskikh Tatar." *Zabveniiu ne Podlezhit.* Kazan; Tatarskoe Knizhnoe Izdateltstvo. 1992. p. 170.

authorities to prove that they had a separate ethnic identity from the larger Volga Tatar population centered around the city of Kazan. For almost 50 years the Crimean Tatars of the Central Asian exile diaspora strove to overcome Soviet propaganda which depicted them as simply a sub-group of the Volga-Kazan Tatars with no links to the Crimea. These exiles clearly understood that Moscow's efforts aimed to weaken their nation's unique claims to the Crimean homeland.[42]

In an interview in the Crimea with one of the founders of the Crimean Tatar dissident movement, Reshat Dzemilev, this source made it clear to the author that, while the Crimean Tatars were grateful to the Volga Tatars for their support in repatriating the Crimean Tatars to their Crimean homeland, the two peoples are sharply distinguished in their origins.[43]

The 20th century exiled Crimean Tatars' claim to a distinctly 'Crimean' origin for their people is supported by 19th century accounts of the southern Tatars in particular. All aspects of the Tat-Tatars' way of life, from their mixed Oghuz-Kipchak Turkic dialect with its traces of older languages, to the specialized farming techniques developed by their ancient forebears, were shaped by the terrain and nature of their dry, mountainous homeland. Many of the mountain and coastal Tats' customs were distinctly Crimean and had pre-Islamic pagan or Christian roots in the peninsula. The Crimean Tatars of this region, for example, celebrated such spring festivals as *Tepreş*, *Derziva* and *Kedreles*, celebrations of nature and land which have few ties to the great Islamic holidays.[44] On *Kedreles*, a distinctly Crimean festival with pagan and Christian roots, the venerated souls of the departed killed in battle (known as the *'Aziz Şehitler'*, Great or Dear Martyrs) were remembered on the Orthodox St. George's Day, April 25th, by horse racing, wrestling and the eating of specially prepared bread in open fields. The memory of Christian saints also survived in the ancient names of Tatar villages and mountains such as Ai Vasili, Ai Gurzuf and Ai Danil (the villages of St. Vasili, St. Joseph and St. Daniel) or Ai Petri and Ai Todor (the mountains of St. Peter and St. Theodor).

[42] Reshat Dzhemilev deals with this subject matter in a work on the return movement and informs us that "The Crimean Tatars are a separate people bred in the Crimea and differentiated from the others by their language, their traditions, their culture, and their history." Reshat Dzhemilev. *Musa Mahmut, Human Torch*. New York; Crimea Foundation. 1986. p. 45.

[43] In the early 1990s the Kazan Tatars organized volunteer labor brigades which assisted the Crimean Tatars in developing their settlements.

[44] B. Kuftin. "Iuzhnoberezhnye Tatary Kryma." *Zabveniiu ne Podlezhit. Iz Istorii Krymskotatarskoi Gosudarstvennosti i Kryma*. Kazan; Tatarskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo. 1992. (originally published in *Obshestvenno-Nauchny Zhurnal*. 1925. no.1). p. 248.

Nowhere was the Crimean Tatar peasant's love of nature and the Crimean land more clearly revealed than in the distinctive, vine-covered Tat houses which had chimneys with nests built in them for nightingales. Of the mountain Tatars' houses, 19th century traveler, Edward Clarke wrote "The Tahtars delight to have their houses buried, as it were, in foliage. These dwellings consist each only of one story, with a low flat roof, beneath trees spreading immense branches quite over the whole building; so that a village, at a distance is only known by the tufted grove wherein it lies concealed."[45] Travelers also mentioned the mountain Tatars' habit of building their houses into the earth on the sides of terraced mountains. In his 19th century account, F. A. Feodorov wrote:

> In the southern part of the Crimea, where the mountains are flat, the Crimean Tatars do not like to build their unique dwellings, instead they place them on the side of cliffs and fit them so they only have to build three walls, the fourth consisting of the mountain on which the home leans. By a similar means of construction, the Tatar village is always located on a mountain cliff and is situated in the form of an amphitheater. The roofs of the homes are flat, forming terraces and, as a result of their aversion to leakage, they are built in a most thorough fashion. The terrace forms for the Crimean Tatar almost the entire home; here they rest from work, here they greet guests.[46]

The lands inhabited by the terraced Tat-Tatar villages make up the southern third of the Crimean Peninsula and consist of a limestone coastal mountain chain known as the Yaila (Tatar for summer or mountain pasture). The chalky Yaila mountains reach a height of just over 5,000 feet and have a gradual incline on their northern side before dropping off sharply on their southern front. The most prominent peak in the range, Çadır Dağ (Tatar 'Tent Mountain' 5,010 feet, 1527 meters) dominates, the central chain with its massive forested base and is the source of the Crimea's largest river, the northward flowing Salgir. The Yaila chain begins in the West, outside the magnificent port city of Sevastopol, and extends one hund-

[45] Edward Clarke. op. cit. no. 30. p. 239.

[46] F.A. Feodorov. *Krym s Sevastopolem Balaklavoiu*. St. Petersburg; Korableva and Siriakova. 1855. p. 38.

red miles to the East where it ends in the outskirts of the ancient port of Kaffa-Feodosiia.[47] On average the Yaila is from thirty to forty miles wide (from north to south) and, in geographic terms, it is considered to be an extension of the Caucasian range.

The Yaila is so named for its distinctive, flat mountain tops covered in fine alpine meadows which have been used as pasture lands by the shepherds of this range since Neolithic times. A 19th century account of the Yaila states:

> The most peculiar feature of the highlands is their summits; they are not rounded or needle-shaped, but consist of extensive flats, forming high table-lands, corresponding to the *paramos* of the Andes, except in size. The people apply to them the name yailas, or mountain pasture grounds. In winter they are covered with snow; but upon its disappearance towards the close of May, a carpet of rich grass appears, which continues fresh through the summer, while the vegetation of the plains is burnt up. Accordingly the Tatars then quit the steppes with their flocks and herds, and occupy these high sites, easily ascended on the northern side, till the season returns when the rain is turned into snow upon the mountain range of the Crimea.[48]

These grassy plateaus are broken by river valleys and have their own names, such as the Ai-Petri Yaila, the Çadır Dağ Yaila, Demerci Yaila and the Babugan Yaila. The Yaila mountains are further divided by three parallel, latitudinal ranges separated by valleys which ascend in height from the low northern hills to the southern mountains proper. The lofty, southernmost range is topped by a plateau which can be easily reached from the gradual northern slopes. On the southern face, however, the Yaila falls off sharply and the narrow shore at the base of these mountains is protected by a series of sharp slopes and cliffs which provide a dramatic backdrop or 'wall' for this hilly coastal strip. Oak and beech forests cover the gradual northern slopes of the range while the steep southern face of the Yaila is covered by Mediterranean evergreen pines, fruit trees, vineyards and fauna endemic to warmer climes.

There are two major valleys carved into the Yaila mountains, the secluded Baidar Valley in the south-westernmost point of the Crimea (between Sevastopol and Foros) and the Sudak Valley in the

[47] N.T. Mirov. *Geography of Russia*. New York; John and Wiley. 1951. pp. 214-215.

[48] Thomas Milner. *The Crimea, Its Ancient and Modern History*. London; Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans. 1855. p. 38

eastern Yaila, which opens out onto the Black Sea. A 19th century visitor to the Baidar Valley praised the beauty of this isolated valley:

> The valley, upwards thirty miles in circuit, is an elegantly shaped oval basin, not deep, enclosed by finely wooded hills, and watered by two limpid streams. It is exclusively occupied by Tatars, who enjoy a degree of prosperity unknown to their co-religionists on the plains, owing to the productiveness of the soil. The villages, eleven in number, have a very pleasing appearance, being surrounded with orchards, and overtopped by enormous round-headed walnut trees. Possibly in extent, beauty, and fertility, the valley may be without rival in Russia.[49]

There is today, once again, a small Crimean Tatar presence in this protected valley, which is reached from the coast via a steep, winding pass known as the *merdivan* (Tatar, 'stairs'). Among the first sights a visitor to this valley encounters when entering the vale from the coast is a Muslim cemetery on the roadside with newly carved tombstones embellished with the Arabic prayers and the Crimean national emblem, the *tarak tamgha*.

The Sudak Valley in the eastern Yaila was similarly known for its Tatar villages and rich soil. It was also famous for the well preserved ruins of one of the best examples of medieval defensive architecture in the Russian Empire, the impressive Genoese coastal castle which still dominates the bay of Sudak.

Travelers to the Tatar-inhabited mountains of the south (this area was too densely settled by Tatars for major Russian settlement prior to the post-Crimean War emigrations of 1860) praised this region for its natural beauty. Laurence Oliphant described his ascent of the range in the 1850s as follows:

> We were well repaid for the fatigue of the ascent by the magnificent view we obtained from this point. Immediately at our feet, and so directly beneath us that a stone might be dropped perpendicular upon the trees 2,000 feet below, lay charmingly diversified woods and meadows-curling wreaths of blue smoke ascended from clumps of trees scattered over the park-like scenery, while large herds of cattle seemed from their diminutiveness to have been peppered out upon the rich pasture-land. Snug-looking Tartar villages were dotted over the well-cultivated valleys, and mountain streams meandered through them to the sea, which was scarcely discernible beneath a dense bank of clouds that altogether concealed from our view the southern horizon. Facing us, towards the west, the rival mountain of the Babugan Yaila reared its stupendous

[49] Laurence Oliphant. *The Russian Shores of the Black Sea*. New York; St. Arno Press. 1970. (First printing 1854). p. 169.

> crags; while far as eye could reach, in a northerly direction, stretched the undulating steppe, narrowing as it reached the Isthmus of Perecop.[50]

The Yaila region is also known for its so-called 'Cave Cities' (medieval limestone citadels), such as Eski Kermen (Old Fortress), Cerkes Kermen (Circassian Fortress), Chufut Kale (Jewish Fortress, also known as Kirk Yer) and Mangup Kale, the ancient seat of the Gothic mountain state. 18th and 19th century travelers to these impressive plateau cities, such as Marie Guthrie who visited the mountains in 1795-6, noticed the indigenous population's "non-Tatar" features and generally came to the same conclusion as Marie Guthrie who felt that the mountain Tats were probably "the remains of the Goths who maintained a highland principality there till the Turkish conquest."[51]

The following description of the dramatic view from the Gothic mountain fortress of Mangup Kale may have been similar to the view seen through the centuries by the ancient Gothic ancestors of the Muslim Tats and provides a vivid picture of this region's topography:

> I was able to gain a more correct idea of the configuration of this part of the Crimea from the fortress of Mangoup Kale than I had yet obtained. A precipitous limestone range extends nearly east and west, parallel to the sea range; and upon the edge of the stupendous cliffs are perched the forts of Tchoufut Kale and Mangoup Kale. The whole of the country intervening between these ranges through which our road now lay, is intersected by lovely valleys, and watered by clear mountain-streams; their banks are highly cultivated and frequent tufted groves betray the existence of the villages which they conceal. This tract is inhabited solely by Tartars, who seem to cling to their highland glens with the tenacity characteristic of mountaineers. They are a hardy, hospitable race, totally different from their lowland brethren.[52]

The Yaila's hardy inhabitants maintained agriculture in the dry mountains through the use of ancient artificial irrigation channels and other techniques used in this region as far back as the Gothic period and perhaps earlier. Evegenii Markov describes the Tat-Tatars' adaptation to this unique environment as follows:

> Only in the mountains, and in particular in hot, rocky mountains such as those in the Crimea is man able to understand what water means for life...The Tatars search out springs as if they were gold and value them as if they were gold. They uncover every small wet place in the stone walls and they work them little by little into a spring...The Tatar is the master of irrigation and channeling of water. Therefore he places great value and worth on irrigation. To build a fountain—that is the highest earthly virtue; the builders of the fountains consider it a requirement to place their name on them; on the fountain, as upon a shrine, you almost always find some scripture from the Qur'an inscribed.[53]

[50] Ibid. p. 161.
[51] Marie Guthrie. *A Tour Performed in 1795-6 Through the Taurida or Crimea.* London; T. Cadell. 1802. p. 214.
[52] Laurence Oliphant. op. cit. no. 49. p. 216.

The Yaliboyu. The Homeland of the Coastal Tats

The traditions of building communal irrigation canals, grafting the fruits and vines of the mountain slopes, shepherding on the Yaila plateaus and constructing terraced villages were not limited to the mountainous interior. There was considerable socio-economic and ethnic continuity between the Tats of the interior mountains and those of the coastal strip.

As far as the climate is concerned, however, the changes between the Yaila mountains proper and the coast are dramatic. Passing southward out of the Yaila mountains over the Angar pass at the foot of Çadır Dağ, the traveler descends into the world of the Yaliboyu as the Crimean coast is approached. In the month of November, the author passed over the high, ice-covered Angar pass connecting Simferopol to coastal city of Alushta and found the difference between the snow-clad northern valleys of the Yaila and the steep southern slopes of the coast to be extraordinary at that time of year. While the winter winds blew through the bare and leafless trees of the gentle northern slopes, the warm southern face of the Yaila mountains was screened from the steppe gales and covered with peach and apple groves and green forests whose leaves had only just begun to change color.

Since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, the returning Crimean Tatars have been largely unsuccessful in settling on this largely Russian-dominated littoral, but 19th century accounts describe this coast as having been a predominately Tatar-inhabited region. Charles Scott's account of his descent along the steep Angar pass just prior to the Crimean War is typical in its description of the

[53] Evgenii Markov. *Ocherkii Kryma.* Simferopol; Tavria. 1995. pp. 210-211.

terraced mountainside villages of the coastal Yaliboyu Tatars:

> The true barrier had now been passed which separates the great steppe, over whose dead level of snow the cold north wind sweeps in the winter (producing a climate unusually rigorous for the latitude), from the warm and sunny regions of the south, into which we had just entered.
>
> On every hand were to be seen Tartar houses embosomed amidst mulberry and walnut trees, with the green tobacco leaf hanging to dry on the awning of trellis-work projecting in front; or villages picturesquely suspended to the side of the hill, the roofs of one row of houses forming a terraced street for that above, and the whole looking like a giant flight of steps. Far on in the valley shot up the tall poplar, here covered with thick foliage, and grown into a noble tree. Bright mountain streamlets, flashing into the light, were again concealed beneath the fringe of the myrtle and lime; and wide tracts were planted with the vine, on which hung the clustering grape; for the vintage had not yet commenced.[54]

Travelers coming through the pass today first come across the city of Alushta (the ancient Byzantine fortress town of Aluston, Greek 'Valley of the Winds', built by Emperor Justinian) which is located on the shore at the foot of the pass. Today the green hills of Alushta are dominated by crumbling, Khrushchev-era, concrete block high-rises and there is only a negligible Tatar presence on the rocky slopes overlooking the city. Prior to the deportation, however, the Crimean Tatars made up 63% of Alushta's population but in the mid 1990s they made up a mere 5.8% of the city's population.[55]

It was on a peach *kolkhoz* (collective farm) on the outskirts of this coastal resort in 1992, that the Crimean Tatar settlers returning from their Soviet exile first clashed with the local Russian-dominated administration. City officials in Alushta were determined to keep the returning Crimean Tatars, who were growing bolder in their land seizures throughout the Crimea at the time, from settling in land on the outskirts of the city. In a short time, Crimean Tatar settlers armed with molotov cocktails, shovels and stones set up a camp and clashed with largely Russian MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) troops and the local militia for the right to settle in the coast which had been unofficially declared off-limits to the Tatars.

This event was, in many ways a watershed, for the Crimean Tatars (who had never resisted expulsions from Crimean lands in the past

[54] Charles Scott. op. cit. no. 33. pp. 232-233.

[55] B. L. Finogeev et. al. *Problemy i Zaniatosty Krymskotatarskogo Naselenia Kryma.* Simferopol; Tavrida. 1994. p. 14

with force) and demonstrated their determination to settle in this cherished part of their homeland. The Crimean Tatars of the 1990s who arrived on the Russian-dominated coast were returning to a land that has been kept alive in their communal memory in the Central Asian diaspora. Crimean Tatars raised in exile in Central Asia on stories of the cherished coastal villages of the Yaliboyu know that the lands around Alushta have been inhabited by their ancestors for centuries and are intent on resettling this land. While the tension has abated in this region since the early 1990s, Andrew Wilson claims this is largely due to the fact that the Crimean Tatars have reached an agreement with the local officials not to penetrate the southern coastal areas in large numbers.[56]

A 19th century account of the now largely Russian inhabited coastal hub of Alushta describes this city as it once was in the following terms:

> The Tartar village is built into this hill, from the base of the summit; so that the whole forms a pyramid, of which the last remnants of the fortress constitute the apex, and around which these humble abodes appear to cling, as though they found safety in the vicinity of their solid masonry.
>
> We mounted to the ruins, passing along the curious streets of house-tops, which served for many other purposes. On some were great piles of walnuts; on others, girls were winnowing corn, as we had seen before; and old Tartars sitting cross-legged, smoking their pipes, as though they found the hard-rolled earth, of which the roofs are composed, the most agreeable kind of seat.[57]

As was the case with the Tat-Tatars of the Yaila mountains, travelers to the Crimea's coast found the Yaliboyu-Tats of the hilly coastal strip to be an amalgam of previous races that had settled on this narrow coast over the centuries. According to Soviet anthropologist B. Kuftin "Anthropologically, the south-coast Tatars, as far as can be judged from the meager material, are distinguished by a lack of Mongol characteristics." [58] This source noticed the influence of the Iranian type traceable to the Alan period. The physiognomy of the coastal Tatars varied considerably from one village to another as did their dialects. The following description of the inhabitants of the village of Dereköy (Yalta vicinity), for example, is typical. "As a result

[56] Andrew Wilson. *The Crimean Tatars.* Cambridge; International Alert. 1994. p. 18.

[57] Charles Scott. op. cit. no. 33. p. 233-234.

[58] B. Kuftin. op. cit. no. 44. p. 19.

of this mixed blood the Tatars of Derekoi differ very noticeably from the other Tatars of the south shore. The men of Derekoi are nearly all well built, tall, with aquiline noses, thick curly hair and swarthy skins."[59] Another 19th century visitor, Ebenezer Henderson wrote of these Tatars "Their features are almost entirely European, and the numerous peculiarities of their dialect leave no room to doubt, that they are the descendants of the Genoese and other Europeans, who had possession of these coasts at no very remote period."[60] A Russian traveler to the coastal mountains of the Crimea at the turn of the century claimed that these Tats considered themselves to be descendants not of the steppe Tatars, but of Genoese and Venetians. After becoming acquainted with the coastal Tatars, this source emphatically stated "The mountain Tatars, who were earlier known as Tats, do not belong to the Mongol tribes, they are a purely Caucasian race."[61]

There are certainly historical grounds for this folk belief among the coastal Tatars that they were descendants of the earlier inhabitants of these shores who chose to settle this littoral for its resemblance to their homelands in Greece and Italy. Visitors to the Yaliboyu (Tatar 'Sea-shore') frequently compared this coastal strip to Greece and Italy. Edward Clarke, for example, described the coast of the Yaliboyu Tats as follows:

> The sea lies at his feet at the distance of a mile, and the high precipitous mountains, which rise in an amphitheater on his left hand, recede a short distance from the coast, and leave a narrow margin of fertile country, with a climate like that of Greece or Italy. The glittering haze of the blue sea, the balmy air, the lofty mountains, with clear outline drawn against a cloudless sky, and softened by the delicate tints of a southern atmosphere, are natural phenomena of which no description can give an idea.[62]

[59] M. N. Morav. *The Crimea. Pearl of the Soviet Union.* Moscow; Intourist. 1934. p. 135.

[60] Ebenezer Henderson. *Biblical Researches and Travels in Russia, Including a Tour in the Crimea.* London; James Nisbet. 1826. p. 364. Adam Narushevicha. *Tavrikiia, ili Izvestiia Drevheishie i Noveishie o Sostoianii Kryma i ego Zhiteliakh do Nashikh Vremen.* Kiev; 1788. p. 178. The unusual physiognomy of the coastal Tatars was also noticed by Russian visitors to the region after the Russian annexation of the Crimea. According to Adam Narushevicha, the Yaliboyu Tatars had "Greek or Roman hair", lighter complexions, blue eyes and were taller than the Tatars of the steppe region. S. Vasiukov'. *Krym i Gornye Tatary.* St. Petersburg; A.F. Devriena. 1904. p. 14.

[61] S. Vasiukov'. *Krym i Gornye Tatary.* St. Petersburg; A.F. Devriena. 1904. p. 14.

[62] Edward Clarke. op. cit. no. 30. p. 197.

Visitors to the Yaliboyu found that the indigenous population of the coast also brought to mind the inhabitants of Greece and Italy. The ethnic, linguistic and cultural holdovers of the earlier Christian peoples, such as the Greeks, Genoese, and Armenians, whose blood and culture had gone into the forging of the coastal Tatars was seen in these Yaliboyu Tats even in the 19th century. The Russian traveler, Evgenii Markov, for example, wrote of the Yaliboyu Tat women and children:

> Their faces are entirely European; white, straight and sometimes red and full of fire with shady eyelashes. Their children are especially close to our own. In them there is not a drop of Mongol blood. When you recall the customs of the south-coast Tatars; the freedom of their women, their celebration of several Christian festivals and memorials, and their love of settled occupations, one cannot but be convinced that the so-called Tatars are as close to the tribes of the Caucasus as we are.[63]

According to Thunmann, at the time of the Russian annexation of the Crimea, the descendants of the great Genoese families of the coast, the Grimaldis, Dorias, and Spinolas, who had probably accepted Islam, still received special privileges from the Crimean Khan in the village of Sortaş (south-west of Bahçesaray).[64] Edward Clarke, claimed "In the south of the Crimea, the remains of the Genoese language are not quite extinct. Now and then an expression escapes even the lips of a Tahtar, evidently derived from that people."[65] As an example, this source claimed, the Tatars of the Yaliboyu used the Italian term *'fortuna'* to refer to a sea storm, a barber was known by the Italian word *'berber'* and the term *macramé* was used for a towel etc. In his 18th century account, Peter Pallas similarly points out that such Italian words as *camera* (chamber), *fenner* (lamp), *sciorbi* (to sip), *baril* (barrel) and many more were still in usage among the coastal Tatars in the late 18th century. Pallas also mentions that the Tatars employed many ancient Greek words in the vocabulary of viniculture.[66] In spite of these linguistic peculiarities, anthropologist B. A. Kuftin claimed that the coastal Tatars of the villages of the coast spoke in "almost pure southern-Turkish" (i.e. Anatolian-Oghuz

[63] Evgenii Markov. op. cit. no. 53. p. 212.

[64] Thunmann. *Der Krimische Staat (Krymskoe Khanstvo).* Simferopol; Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Krym. ASSR. 1936. op. cit. p. 36.

[65] Edward Clarke. op. cit. no. 30. p. 254.

[66] Peter Pallas. op. cit. no. 31.p. 395.

Turkish) and this form of Turkic spread into the surrounding mountains where a Kipchak-Oghuz hybrid language developed.[67]

While the language of the Yaliboyu Tatars may have had Anatolian origins traceable to the settlement of this region in the period of the Seljuk Sultanate, many traditions here, such as the building of villages on terraced mountain slopes (often described as 'amphitheaters'), could be traced to the nearby Caucasus. The Crimea's links to the mountain and coastal villages of the nearby Caucasus range can be seen in the following description of the Yaliboyu Tatar villages:

> The Tatars of the southern coast live in villages-perched for the most part significantly back from the sea, among wine growing terraces and tobacco plantations open to the hot sun-on the towering slopes of mountains, among which run springs through the rocks which form the main street of the village which is overshadowed here and there by lonesome trees. They are settled in picturesque amphitheaters on the backdrop of the lonely rocky landscape and, in the eastern, more open parts of the south Crimean shore, the villages are placed still further back from the sea in the upper reaches of valleys.[68]

In the secluded Tatar villages of the Sudak vicinity, where Russian settlement was initially rather limited, 19th century visitors to the Crimea described a way of life that would have differed little from that existing on this coast for over two millennia:

> In every village the traveler, especially if he be not Russian, is received with the most affectionate care. Everywhere the best house, the most beautiful cushions and carpets, are placed at his disposal, and he is installed in a good apartment with coffee and *tchibouk* (pipe), in a way which can be appreciated only by those who know the inconveniences as well as pleasures of traveling in the East. At Toulouk, Kouz and Otouz, the Tatar dwellings, with their flat roofs, are raised against the hills which border the valley, and by this arrangement the inhabitants communicate generally by terraces of their houses. Nothing can be more picturesque than the appearance of these terraces on an evening: at the moment the whole population, men, women and children, are on the alert, and desert their dark chambers, where they seek refuge against the sun during the day, to install themselves on the roofs of the houses.
>
> The most agreeable animation succeeds the silence of the day, loud conversations are heard on all sides, and a very picturesque effect is produced by the various groups who, still employed in household occupations, thus enjoy the coolness of the evening.[69]

[67] B. A. Kuftin. op. cit. no. 44. p. 242.
[68] Ibid. pp. 244-245.

Bahçesaray, the Center of Traditional Crimean Tatar Life

For the most part, the Tsar's Crimean Muslim subjects were concentrated in the Crimean countryside in villages similar to those described above, in the new, ethnically mixed Crimean capital of Simferopol, or in the old Tatar cities of Karasubazar and, most importantly, Bahçesaray. Russian authors, and the odd Western visitor traveling to the valley city of Bahçesaray found in this Muslim enclave (often described as the 'Russian Alhambra') inspiration for Oriental Romanticism and musing of lost greatness in the form of the khan's palace complex. With its turban-capped marble gravestones inscribed in Arabic, latticed harem, falconry tower, Ottoman-style Khan Cami Mosque, and its numerous fountains (which were praised by such Russian poets as Alexander Pushkin), the Khan Saray (Khan's Palace) complex is the only remaining palace raised by the Tatar descendants of the Golden Horde.[70]

Today the Khan Saray palace complex is the most cherished architectural symbol of the returning Crimean Tatar nation. Many Crimean Tatars have begun to resettle in the distinctive white-washed stone houses which were built by their ancestors in the narrow valley below the palace. The Khan Cami mosque, which was an atheist museum dedicated to the 'Islamic fanaticism' of the 'Mongol-Tatar occupiers of the Crimea' during the Crimean Tatars' absence, is now the scene of joyous Tatar weddings which are videotaped and sent back to family members still living in the Central Asian diaspora.

While in Bahçesaray, the author saw a tumbled minaret and vandalized mosque reminiscent of the recent anti-Muslim destruction in Bosnia or Kosovo, but there were also signs to indicate that the Tatars have begun to rebuild their Islamic monuments in the old capital of the Giray khans. The Tahtali Cami (The Wooden Mosque) in the palace vicinity, for example, has been skillfully restored

[69] Edward Clarke. op. cit. no. 30. pp. 234-235.
[70] I.B. Arbitailo. *Ves' Gorod kak Volshebny Krai. Baxchisarai v Isskustve.* Simferopol; 'Tavriia.' 1993.

with brick roof tiles, wooden Arabic inscriptions and its needle shaped Ottoman-style minaret.

Bahçesaray has, despite the damage inflicted on it through Soviet-era neglect, managed to preserve much of its unique Eastern charm to this day. With the destruction of the majority of their terraced mountain villages throughout the Crimea, it is the best place to gain an understanding of traditional Crimean Tatar village life. Crooked cobblestone streets wind up the valley's steep sides past crumbling Giray dynasty *türbes* (mausoleums), minarets dot the steep valley's floor and much of the town is hidden from above by the trees and orchards which earned the city the name Bahçesaray (Tatar 'Garden Palace').

Many of the houses built in the narrow gorge of the Çuruk Su river, which flows the length of the town, are two-storied with trellised Ottoman-style balconies facing the street. At the end of the three mile valley lies Chufut Kale, 'Jewish Fortress' (Kirk Yer), an ancient hill fortress once occupied by the Alans and Tatars but inhabited by a distinct Jewish ethnic group protected by the Khans, the Karaim Jews, from the 16th to the late 19th century. With all of its history and charm, Bahçesaray offers a drastic contrast to the drab, concrete apartment complexes that sprawl around such typically Soviet Crimean cities as Kerch, Sevastopol and Simferopol.

A century ago, travelers to the Russian province of the Tauride found themselves similarly transported back in time to the era of the Giray khans when they entered the narrow valley of Bahçesaray. In describing the difference between the typical Russian provincial center of Simferopol and the medieval village of Bahçesaray, 19th century visitor Ebenezer Henderson, for example, wrote "The transition was nearly as great as that a person would be conscious of should he be transported in a moment from any European town, and set down in the midst of Bokhora or Samarcand-so completely did every subject wear an Asiatic appearance."[71] Edward Clarke described Bahçesaray as "one of the most remarkable towns in Europe" and, as the Crimean countryside became increasingly Slavicized in the 19th century, travelers to Bahçesaray continued to describe the city as a center of traditional Crimean-Muslim culture.[72] In his work Henderson describes the town as follows:

[71] Ebenezer Henderson. *Biblical Researches and Travels in Russia, Including a Tour in the Crimea.* London; James Nisbet. 1826. p. 364 and p. 296.
[72] Edward Clarke op. cit. no. 30. p. 170.

> The situation of Baghtchisarai is exceedingly picturesque, being overhung on the north side by a precipitous and fantastic mountain, and shut in on the other by one somewhat lower, on which we observed the ruins of two palaces, formerly occupied by some of the royal family. The houses are spread over the narrow valley, formed by these mountain-ranges, to a length of three versts, and are built of brick or wood, and covered with red tiles. With the exception of the shops, in which are manufactured and sold all the variety of small wares requisite for the support of Asiatic luxury, superadded to a few articles of necessary consumption, all the houses are surrounded with stone walls, and generally in front a wooden *piazza*, in which the inhabitants are fond of lounging for the sake of fresh air. The immense number of poplars rising from the orchards, around which the houses are built, greatly enhances the romantic beauty of the town. The inhabitants are well supplied with the finest water, by a small covered conduit running along one side of the principal streets, from which it is conveyed into the houses. With the exception of a few Greeks and Armenians, it is wholly populated by Tatars and Jews; and contains 9,000 souls. The Tatars are most numerous, and have not fewer than thirty-three mosques, three *medressas*, or schools of divinity, and a hundred and fifty *Mollahs*, who are attached to the mosques and schools...[73]

The Muslim aspect of Bahçesaray was stressed by visitors to the region as late as the early Soviet period. In 1934, M. N. Morav wrote of the city:

> The buildings are of one or two stories with balconies and galleries overhanging interior courts and only blind walls facing the street. A thoroughly oriental atmosphere is given to the city by the innumerable little shops with open fronts facing narrow, awning-shaded terraces which crowd the main street, by the tapering minarets surmounted by the star and crescent which rise above the roofs and courtyards and by the many fountains of which there are said to be 119.[74]

The Negative Impact of Russian Colonial Rule in the Crimea

These eyewitness accounts of the customs, culture, economy and way of life found among the Crimean Tatars of Bahçesaray, the steppes, shore and mountains of the Crimean Peninsula are, however, the only record of an ancient Black Sea culture that many 19th century visitors felt was dying out under Russian rule. In spite of the buco-

[73] Henderson op. cit. no. 71. pp. 300-301.
[74] M. N. Morav. *The Crimea. Pearl of the Soviet Union.* Moscow; Intourist. 1934. p. 48.

lic nature of the initial descriptions of the Muslim peasants of the Crimean countryside provided by outsiders, many visitors to the region felt they were recording for posterity a people who were on the verge of disappearing. Meriel Buchanan's account is typical:

> Along the shores of the Black Sea, in green valleys, on rough rocky slopes little Tartar villages cluster, mosques with slender minarets, low-roofed houses, whitewashed or painted a faded salmon pink, children with solemn faces wearing stiff red and gold caps look up at one with enormous dark brown eyes, men whose features are more Greek than Asiatic smile and murmur a gentle greeting, while women peer at one curiously from dark door-ways of rough covered carts drawn with little shaggy horses decorated with blue beads to keep off the evil eye. All the radiance of the East lies about them, all the glamour of a race fast dying out and becoming extinct.[75]

In the decades following the Crimea's annexation, the Crimean Tatars' age-old way of life appeared, according to these accounts, to disintegrate as the Russian *pomeshchiks*, settlers and Tsarist officials moved into this peninsula and gained control over the lands of the Crimean Tatar peasantry.

The collapse of Crimean Tatar society was most clearly manifested in the extraordinary series of migrations this people made that saw this community gradually transformed into a Muslim minority in a Slavic sea. The Crimean Muslims had, since the time of the Russian conquest, reacted to the Slavic rule and influx by migrating in spurts to the lands of their historical allies and ethno-religious kin, the Ottomans. The pace of this migration accelerated in the 19th century as more and more land belonging to Crimean communes and villages was expropriated by Russian magnates and Crimean Tatar *mirzas*.

For all Catherine II's noble intentions, many aspects of Russian colonial policy towards the Crimean Muslims appeared to be causing this people to flee their ancestral homes *en masse* for the lands of the Ottoman Sultan in the decades after her death. As the size of the Muslim Tatar population dropped due to massive out-migration, the Tatar remnant that remained in the Crimea appeared to face the definite possibility of extinction as a separate ethnic group.

The following 19th century account of the Crimean Tatars is

[75] Meriel Buchanan. *Recollections of Imperial Russia*. New York; George Doran and co. 1924. p. 228.

typical in its gloomy prognosis for the ancient inhabitants of the Crimean Peninsula:

> What are the destinies ultimately reserved for the Mussulman population of the Crimea now numbering barely 100,000 souls? We are strongly inclined to anticipate its total extinction at a more or less remote date. The tribes are rapidly degenerating; the moral and physical forces of the nation are daily declining; the territorial wealth of the Tatars has been destroyed, sold or divided; the native families distinguished for their past history or for their fathers' fortunes have disappeared; the population, instead of increasing, diminishes. There remains, therefore, no element of vitality to revive the effete remains of a power that made Russia tremble so many centuries, and that even menaced for a while the existence of all Europe.[76]

19th century Russian colonial officials initially made little effort to understand the true causes of the decline and massive out-migration of the Crimea's Muslim population and Russian sources tend to ascribe this inexplicable departure of the Crimea's native population to 'Islamic fanaticism' or 'Oriental fatalism' among the natives. These simplistic explanations hardly explain the phenomenon that saw an entire people, who were known for their tolerant frontier version of Islam not their fanaticism, leave their cherished hearth to undertake perilous journeys to the Ottoman provinces of Anatolia, the Caucasus and the Balkans.

A more nuanced analysis of the causes for the migrations points to (among other things) differing concepts of land ownership and property rights between the traditionally free Tatar peasantry and the new Russian landowners in the Crimea. Contemporary sources also speak of a growing lack of respect for the Crimea's Muslim culture by the Russian colonial authorities and increasing examples of land expropriation by Russian magnates.

Russian colonial rule in the Crimea was, for the most part, not marked by bloody colonial excesses and massacres nor could the Russians, who freely intermarried with non-Russians throughout Siberia and the Volga region, be censored for their sense of racial superiority (of the sort manifested by the British Raj in colonial India for instance). They did, however, manifest a distinct lack of respect for the Muslim culture of the 'indolent' or 'fanatic' Tatars that became increasingly noticeable in the 19th century as the Russians found

[76] Xavier Hommaire de Hell. *Travels in the Steppes of the Caspian Sea, the Crimea and the Caucasus*. London; Chapman and Hall. 1847. p. 423.

themselves fighting Muslims on several fronts, from the Balkans and Caucasus to Central Asia. Edward Clarke was especially scathing in his description of Russian treatment of Islamic culture in the Crimea. In Bahçesaray, for example, Clarke reports "When the *mullahs*, or Tahtar priests, ascended the minarets at midday, to proclaim the hour of noon according to their custom, the Russian soldiers amused themselves by firing at them with muskets; and in one of these instances a priest was killed."[77] In another incident this source describes the destruction of Islamic architecture and monuments in the city of Kaffa by the local Russian authorities:

> We were in a Turkish coffee-house at Caffa, when the principal minaret, one of the ancient and characteristic monuments of the country, was thrown down with such violence, that it shook every house in the place. The Turks, seated on divans, were smoking; and when this is the case, an earthquake will scarcely rouse them; nevertheless, at this flagrant act of impiety and dishonor, they all rose, breathing deep and bitter curses against the enemies of their prophet.[78]

Clarke also mentions that, in Karasubazar, the hallowed Tatar cemeteries, which played a key role in both Muslim ceremonies, such as *Kurban Bayram* (the celebration of sacrifices) and *Oraza Bayram* and pre-Islamic festivals, were divested of their tombstones by the Russians for building purposes.[79]

As their homeland was gradually transformed into a typical Russian province following waves of Slavic settlement, their land confiscated by *pomeshchiks*, and their communal sense of Islamic identity increasingly threatened; the Crimea's Muslim population increasingly abandoned the Crimea for the lands of the *Dar al-Islam*, the Islamic Ottoman Empire. According to General Totleben, after the departure of their benefactor, Prince Mikhail Vorontsov the Crimean Tatars had a saying "Vorontsov left and the Tatars fell."[80] For many Crimean Muslims living under Russian rule, the Crimean shores, mountains and steppes had ceased to be considered their homeland in traditional Islamic terms and had been transformed into the *Dar al-Kufr* (Abode of the Infidel) or the *Dar al-Harb*.

Western travel accounts of the Russian administration, which had

[77] Edward Clarke. op. cit. no. 29. p. 173.
[78] Ibid. p. 145.
[79] Ibid. p. 159.
[80] Totleben E. I. "O Vyselenii Tatar iz Kryma v 1860 gody." *Russkaia Starina*. June. 1893. p. 549.

initially praised the Russian bureaucracy's treatment of the Crimean Tatars, began to give increasingly critical commentaries on the government's handling of the Crimea's indigenous population. Laurence Oliphant, for example, commented:

> It was melancholy to think that the inhabitants of these lovely valleys were disappearing under the blighting influence which Russia appears to exercise over her Muslim subjects. Of late years the Tartars have been rapidly diminishing, and now number about a hundred thousand, or scarcely half the population of the Crimea. Their energy, too, seems declining with their numbers. Whole tracts of country susceptible of a high state of cultivation, and once producing abundantly, are now lying waste; their manufactories deteriorating, their territorial wealth destroyed, their noble families becoming extinct, their poor ground down by Russian tax-gatherers, and swindled out of their substance by dishonest sub-officials.[81]

No outside witness, however, proclaimed the failure of Catherine the Great's lofty plans for her Crimean Muslim subjects as eloquently as the silent testimony given in the form of tens of thousands of industrious Crimean Tatar peasants who quietly migrated from the shores of the Crimea in the decades following the Tsarina's death. As was the case in other colonial empires, the impact of the Russian colonial rule on the Crimea was seen by the native population as having been negative in spite of the benefits this community undoubtedly received from their colonial rulers in the shape of advances of the sort expounded upon by Nadinskii. The period of the first great *sürgün* (Tatar, 'exile') had begun with the coming of the Russians. Far from seeing the 19th century as a period of growing prosperity and modernization, the departing Crimean Tatars saw it as a period of dispossession typified by a growing loss of land and increasing anti-Muslim discrimination.

While the era of Russian rule over the Tatars had begun with the high expectations for enlightened rule in the Crimea envisioned by Catherine II, the 19th century saw the failure of these noble aspirations as local Crimean landowners, administrators and military officials confiscated the Tatar farmers' land and displaced the Muslim peasantry from their villages in time of war. While the Tsarina and several of her governors had attempted to protect this community, their efforts had little real effect on the ground in the Crimea over the long term. The fate of the 19th century Crimean Tatar

[81] Oliphant. op. cit. no. 49. p. 218.

peasant was actually to be decided by Westernized *pomeshchiks* who resided in the Tauride province's capital, Simferopol. These members of the Russian *dvorianstvo* (nobility), who spoke cultured French, read Pushkin, attended society balls and exploited the local peasantry much as their compatriots did the Russian serfs in Russia proper, were to decide the Crimean Muslim peasants' fate. It was the administrative center of Simferopol built on the banks of the Salgir River, not distant St. Petersburg, that taxed the local Tatar peasantry, adjudicated in land disputes between Tatar communes and Russian *pomeshchiks* and decided the fate of the Crimea's Muslim population during time of war with Turkey.

With its grid pattern streets, Romanesque administrative architecture, domed Orthodox church topped with gold crosses, and parade grounds, Simferopol was a typical south Russian provincial town and contrasted sharply with the old Tatar village (still known as Ak Mecit, 'White Mosque') that it had come to envelop. Never was the contrast between the worlds of the Crimean Muslim and Russian administrator-landlord more clearly juxtaposed than in the comparison between the Western administrative center of Simferopol (the New Town) and the Old Town of Tatar Ak Mecit.

Known for its winding cobblestone streets, faceless white washed-walls that hid the interior courts of Tatar houses, and its bazaar which sprawled around the ancient Kebir Cami ('Great Mosque', built to celebrate a successful campaign by a Tatar *bey* against Russia in 1508), Ak Mecit retained its traditional Muslim Tatar character even as the Crimea was transformed around it into a typical Russian province.

That the two worlds personified by the old and new sections of this city were to have a difficult time co-existing under Russian rule was to become increasingly evident as the 19th century unfolded. This century revealed that, in the Russian Crimea, as throughout the contemporary colonial world, imperial rule was to result in the collapse of the weaker, native population's traditional way of life and the supremacy of the colonial power's culture.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISPOSSESSION. THE LOSS OF THE CRIMEAN HOMELAND

Scattered throughout the lands of the former Ottoman provinces of what is today Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey are hundreds of thousands, if not millions of descendants of those Crimean Tatars who migrated to these countries during the 18th and 19th centuries. While Tsarist officials often attributed these migrations to calls for *hijra* (migration from the land of the unbeliever to the land of Islam) originating from the Ottoman Empire, Turkish and Tatar sources make it clear that the Russian administration and landlords made life so unbearable for the Muslim Tatars in the Tauride Province that they were forced to abandon their homeland.[1]

For Tsarist officials in the 19th century Crimea, the religious ties between the Crimean Tatars and Ottoman Turks were seen as the main cause for this people's migrations to the lands of the Sultan. In this period religion was still the primary basis for communal identification for both the Orthodox Russians and the Crimean Muslims. Many Russian officials, therefore, saw it as somehow natural that the Crimean Tatars should desire to leave Orthodox Russia for the lands of the paramount 19th century Muslim state, the Ottoman Empire. The Crimea was now part of the Russian *rodina* (homeland), which was still defined in terms of Orthodoxy by most Russians well into the 19th century and the Crimean Muslims were now suspect in this land. Others saw the existence of religious links to the Ottoman Empire by the Crimean Muslim community as an act of betrayal or manifestation of 'fanaticism.'

In his in-depth (and rather sympathetic) account of the Crimean Tatar migrations, the Russian writer Arsenii Markevich summed up many Tsarist officials' views on the Crimean Muslims' strange 19th century mass abandonment of the Crimea. According to this source "Religious fanaticism, nationalistic tendencies related to political

[1] Hakan Kirimli bluntly states "the primary motivation for the emigrations arose incontrovertibly within the Crimea." Hakan Kirimli. *National Movements and National Identity Among the Crimean Tatars (1905-1916)*. Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1996. p. 9.

events, indolence and the lack of culture of the Tatar masses, and even a significant portion of the *mirza* class, and a fear of having to leave for general military duty beyond the borders of the Crimea, these are the main reasons for the exit of Tatars from the Crimea in 1860."[2] Not surprisingly, Nadinskii, provides a similar description of the causes for the exodus of the Crimean Tatars during the 18th and 19th centuries stating "Infected with religious fanaticism, the Crimean Tatars kow-towed before the Sultan of Turkey. They were under the influence of the propaganda of Turkish agents and *mullahs*."[3]

Crimean Tatars from the Turkish, Bulgarian and Romanian diaspora, on the other hand, equate the emigrations with ethnic cleansing and see the mass flight of their ancestors from their native place as clear proof that they were oppressed by their Russian colonial rulers. The most important cause for the out-migration of their ancestors from their homeland was, according to the Crimean Tatars' argument, the Russian colonial administration's confiscation of that which was most cherished by the Crimean Tatar peasants, their land. The nationalistic Crimean Tatars of today see themselves as 'the Crimea's true owners' *(Kırımın öz sahipleri)* and view the Russians as trespassers on the Crimean *anavatan* (motherland). According to the Crimean Tatars, this dispossession of land, when combined with colonial excesses during time of war, led the Crimean Muslims to reluctantly abandon their Crimean hearth and seek succor in the welcoming lands of the Ottoman Sultan.

A 20th century Crimean Tatar nationalist, Ahmet Ozenbaşli, stated quite simply "these migrations were completely instigated and directed by the Imperialist Russian government."[4] In another work, this source decries efforts by Russian and Soviet writers to "hide this event behind the imaginary fantasy of the Tatar masses' gravitation towards their co-religionists, Turkey."[5] In the words of Mubeyyin Batu Altan, a leader of the small Crimean Tatar diaspora in America "Being deprived of their land, religious institutions, schools and their cultural life, the Crimean Tatars had no choice but to abandon their homeland and move to Turkey."[6] In a similar accusatory vein, Etham Feyzi Gözaydin argued that "the migrations were not the outcome of the land's environment, or scarcity of natural springs or want of proportional income nor the effects of religious incitement."[7]

These condemnations of Russian colonial rule in the Crimea by the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey are tame in comparison to those made by Crimean Tatars of the Central Asian diaspora. The Crimean Tatars of Central Asia had their own first hand experience with mass expulsion and exile which they have long depicted as the final step in a historic policy of demographic warfare aimed at creating a *"Kırım, Kırım Tatarsız"* (a Crimea without Crimean Tatars). Sh. U. Mustafaev, a Crimean Tatar writer, for example, proclaimed in a recent article:

> Russian colonial politics in the Crimea had only one objective—'A Crimea without Crimean Tatars.' With this aim they systematically organized various persecutions (political, economic, religious) which led to the massive exit of Crimean Tatars from their homeland. Always the best, hardest-working, self-aware left and those left behind can be seen as the moan of a people. Under the yoke of colonialism, the Crimean Tatars perished. Fettered by religious dogma, fleeced by foreign exploitation, without rights, neglected by officials, the people lived for a hundred years in a nightmare.[8]

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[2] Arsenii Markevich. "Pereseleniia Krymskikh Tatar v Turtsiiu s sviazi s Dvizheniem Naseleniia v Krymu." *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk SSSR.* series 7, no. 4 (1928). p. 405.

[3] Nadinskii. *Ocherki po Istorii Kryma.* Simferopol; Tavria. vol. 1. 1951 pp. 140-141.

[4] Ahmet Özenbaşlı. "Çarlık Hakimiyetinde Kırım Faciası." *Emel.* no. 110. Oçak-Subat. 1979. p. 26.

[5] Ahmet Özenbaşli. "Rol' Tsarskogo Pravetel'stva v Emigratsii Krymskikh Tatar." *Zabveniiu ne Podlezhit.* Kazan; Tatarskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo. 1992. p. 69.

[6] Mubeyyin Batu Altan. "Plight of the Crimean Tatar People." *Crimean Review.* vol. 1. no.1 May 18, 1996. p. 6.

[7] It should also be mentioned here that the Turks of Crimean Tatar descent were strongly influenced by the Kemalist, secular revolution and have been influenced by anti-clerical views prevalent in Republican Turkey. For the Crimean Tatar diaspora of Turkey (many of whom see themselves as having belonged to a secular nation even prior to the rise of a national movement among the Crimean Tatars), to admit that their ancestors migrated to the Ottoman Empire as a result of 'religious incitement' or at the urging of 'fanatic *mullahs*' is both politically inexpedient and a refutation of their claims to having possessed a secular national identity in earlier centuries. Etham Feyzi Gözaydin, *Kırım. Kırım Türklerinin Yerleşme ve Goçmeleri.* Istanbul; Vakıt Matbaası. 1948. p. 70.

[8] Sh. U. Mustafaev. "Evoliutsiia Samosoznaniia-Vzgliad Iznutri." *Krymskie Tatary: Problemy Pepatriatsi.* ed. A.P. Viatkin and E.S. Kul'pin. Moscow; Rossiiskaia Akedemiia Nauk. 1997. p. 22.

Traditional Patterns of Crimean Tatar Land Tenure

As with previous chapters in Crimean history, both the Russian and Tatar perspectives are based in history and can be traced to the early periods of Russian settlement in the newly-conquered Crimea. Upon arrival in the Crimea, the Russian colonial rulers were confronted with a labyrinthine system of traditional land ownership rooted in the centuries-old blend of Islamic, pre-Islamic and steppe traditions. In particular, the arriving Russian colonial officials faced considerable obstacles in adapting the traditional Tatar concepts of communal property and shared land ownership to their system of capitalist exploitation which had been forged in conjunction with a vastly different system of serf-feudalism.

Russian officials soon discovered that Crimean Tatar concepts of land and property were based on the local traditions of *shariat* (Islamic law) and the ancient *cemaat* (village commune). The enormous cultural differences between the Orthodox Russian landowners and the traditionally-organized Crimean Muslim peasants were of course magnified by these differing views of land and property ownership. According to Druzhinina:

> At the time of the annexation of the Crimea by Russia, free peasant-communes were still extant here. They jointly possessed pastures, hay making, forests and other lands considered to be the property of one or several *cemaats*. Land use was in no way regulated. Collective herds grazed everywhere. He who wanted to mow grass could do so in any place and in any quantity.[9]

Kuftin makes a similar observation his work on the Crimean Tatars of the south Crimean mountains:

> The forest and pastures of the Yaila belonged in communal ownership to the village. Life in the village commune was manifested in the form of communal assistance and labor *(talaka)* in exchange for small hospitality and also in the form of communal leadership over the village's workers. The custom of communal sowing, communal collection of harvest and grapes etc. on a day designated by the village council was thus preserved for a long period.[10]

19th century accounts make it clear that communal ownership of land was also prevalent among the Nogais of the Crimean steppe

[9] E.I. Druzhinina. *Severnoe Prichernomor'e v 1775-1800 g.g.* Moscow; 1995. p. 109.
[10] B. Kuftin. "Iuzhnoberezhnye Tatary Kryma." *Zabveniiu ne Podlezhit.* Kazan; Tatarskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo. 1992. pp. 247-248.

and this form of ownership was the cause of arguments between the Russians and native Tatars.[11] Modern historians agree with these 19th century accounts and Kemal Karpat claims that in the Crimea, land belonged in essence to the "community as a whole."[12] In his survey, the 19th century Russian writer G. Bliumfeld provides a similar description of this archaic form of communal land ownership found among the Crimean Tatars. According to this account, communes were fully entrenched in traditional Crimean society on all levels and their members defended their rights to land against neighboring communes.[13]

In light of the importance of Islam among the Crimean Tatars it is not surprising that all aspects of land ownership on the communal lands of the Muslim peasants were shaped by Islamic notions of land and land use.[14] According to Islamic law, the khan, *beys* and *mirzas* could not claim the free peasantry as their serfs and for this reason the Tatar population of the Crimean Khanate had remained free in comparison to peasants in Russia or other parts of Eastern Europe.[15] Local Muslim law declared that all land designated as 'wild or untilled lands' could be freely cultivated by Muslim farmers and this contributed to the spread of the Crimea's agricultural lands.[16] In practice the category of 'wild lands' included any previously uncultivated land that a peasant brought under cultivation. Qur'anic law also prevented Tatar landlords from claiming ownership over forests, springs, communal wells or fountains and wild pastures which were deemed to belong to the *umma* (religious community) as a whole. The Crimean Tatars' labor obligations to their *bey* or *mirza* were also prescribed by Islamic law and ancient custom and

[11] According to Hommaire de Hell "The territory of the Nogais is still common property and the want of finite boundaries occasions many quarrels, especially around harvest time." Xavier Hommaire de Hell. *Travels in the Steppes of the Caspian Sea, the Crimea and the Caucasus.* London; Chapman and Hall. 1847. p. 275.
[12] Kemal Karpat. "The Crimean Emigration of 1856-1862 and the Settlement and Urban Development of Dobruca." *Turco-Tatar Past, Soviet Present.* Paris; Editions Peeters. 1986. p. 277.
[13] G. Bliumfeld. *Krymsko-Tatarskoe Zemlevladenie.* Odessa; Odessa Vestnik. 1888. p. 35.
[14] Bliumfeld writes "Strengthening the authority of the Khan on one hand, Islam on the other hand rendered an invaluable service to the Crimean Tatar population, bringing a humane beginning to the forms of land relations between the Tatar-settler and the landowner." Ibid. p. 29.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

their duties to their landlords were limited to the *ushr* (Qur'anic tithe) and *talaka* (*corvee* work on mountain canals, wells etc.).

One of the most misunderstood forms of Islamic land ownership encountered among the Crimean Tatars by the Russian colonial administration was the institution of *vakıf*. The Arabic term *vakıf* (literally property held in *mortmain*) referred to a vast network of pious endowments of land given over the centuries by wealthy Muslim sponsors for the support of religious institutions; such as mosques, *medreses*, *türbes* (mausoleums), or fountains (which had great religious significance for the Tatars) or to pay the salary of *mullahs* or *sheikhs*. The *vakıf* is an institution peculiar to Islam and operated as a pre-modern social service as well as a 'tax shelter' for the descendants of the donor who received a share of the profits from the protected land donated for the upkeep of a public work.[17] According to one estimate, a full 25% of the land in the Crimea was considered *vakıf toprakları* (*vakıf* lands) prior to the time of the Khanate's annexation.[18]

A reading of Bliumenfeld's account makes it clear that the Russian colonial administration initially made a genuine effort to integrate the complex system of Crimean Muslim land ownership into the provincial bureaucratic system. Despite the legal efforts on the part of several governors of the Tauride Province to adapt the *vakıf* and *cemaat* to the Russian system it was, however, inevitable that many Tatar peasants would find themselves dispossessed of land or living on the land of Russian *pomeshchiks*.

By the 19th century the traditional forms of Crimean Tatar land ownership based on the *vakıf* institution and village-commune had begun to disintegrate as Russian landowners confiscated the Tatar peasants' land in large quantities. This loss of land by the Muslim peasants and disruption of the ancient communes was, in part, a result of bureaucratic misunderstandings between the Russian administrators and simple Tatar peasants. In his work on the 19th century emigrations of the Crimean Tatars to Turkey, G. P. Levitskii, for example, mentions that many Crimean Tatars did not realize that, by declaring their lands to be communal property to government

[17] Writing in the 19th century, Bliumfeld claimed "*vakıf* possessions occupy a great portion of the Crimean Peninsula. From the *kamikan* (village official) reports presented to Baron Igel'strom in 1783 it is apparent that in that period in the Crimea there were close to 1,600 mosques and religious schools *(medreses)*." Ibid. p. 59.

[18] Gözaydin. op. cit. no. 7. p. 38.

surveyors, they lost ownership rights to them according to Russian regulations. Levitskii writes:

> The surveyors, in order to decrease their task of designating all fractional plots of land, addressed the ignorant Tatars with this question: "Do these lands belong to the entire commune?" The Tatars, not having understood the greater significance of the question and the consequences for themselves, usually answered in the affirmative and the these lands were entered into the plan under the heading of communal property i.e. they belonged to a certain village. In this fashion many Tatars' plots were converted into private property and transformed into property of the state.[19]

The First Crimean Tatar Emigration

The expropriation of land from the Crimea's Muslim population began soon after the Russian annexation of the Crimean Khanate in 1783. In the aftermath of the Crimea's annexation, Catherine's favorite, Prince Grigorii Potemkin, the first governor of the Tauride Province, had begun the process of distributing these broad swaths of Crimean lands to the Russian *dvorianstvo* (nobility) and local administration. Subsequently there was an initial period of disruption as the Russian landlords took control of their lands in the south (especially lands belonging to the departed Ottomans) and began the process of adapting to its climate. According to Vladimir Ovod, Potemkin attempted to halt the emigration of the Crimean Tatar peasants resulting from this disorder for strictly economic reasons, but was ultimately unsuccessful. Ovod writes:

> The price of the emigration was that the Crimea lost a population that was well acquainted with the physical conditions of the region on which many generations of their ancestors had lived and worked. This alarming circumstance caught the attention of G. A. Potemkin who wrote to the Tauride *oblast* governor on the 16th of August, 1787 on the necessity of turning greater attention to relations with the Crimean Tatars, in order to restrain their exit. It was, however, apparent that this was already impossible since the disruption of the former cultural-economic way of life had exacerbated the position of the main mass of the Tatar population and had impelled them to emigrate.[20]

[19] G.I. Levitskii. "Pereselenie Tatar iz Kryma v Turtsiiu." *Vestnik Evropy*. no. 10. Oct. 1882. p. 600.

[20] Vladimir Ovod. *Migratsionye Protsessy v Krymy: Istoriia, Problemy, Perspektivy*. Simferopol; Crimean Administration of Migration. 1997. p. 13.

The scale of this initial wave of migration, which was a result of the changing of administrations in the Crimea and disruption related to the expropriation of *miri* lands (state lands belonging to the Sultan on the southern coast) and *Khanlık* (royal Giray) lands, has been debated. The initial out-migration took place in the years 1784-1787 and involved the departure of Yaliboyu coastal dwellers (both Turks and Tatars) who were associated with the Ottoman Empire; especially inhabitants of the old provincial capital of Kefe.

This process had been going on since the war years and had seen the flight of many high officials and local aristocracy associated with the Ottoman administration. Thousands may have emigrated to the Ottoman Empire during this period (which would in part explain the small Tatar population in the Crimea at the time of its annexation), but there are no precise records of this movement.[21]

Although tens of thousands of Crimean Muslims may have left during the war years (reducing the population of the Crimea to approximately 300,000 at the time of its annexation), the initial post-annexation departure was limited to approximately 8,000 coastal dwellers.[22] According to Arsenii Markevich's account of the migration, the Nogai Tatars of the Crimean steppe did not participate in this early migration which was largely limited to the Yaliboyu Tatars who were closely linked to the Turks.[23]

In the years following the immediate Russian annexation of the Crimea, this initial wave of migration to the lands of the Sultan was limited in scope. Regardless, many Crimean Tatars continued to look across the Black Sea to the Ottomans to free the Crimea of foreign Christian rule. According Ahmed Resmi, an 18th Century Ottoman envoy, many Ottoman officials similarly felt it was their obligation as Muslims to liberate this lost land of the *Dar al-Islam* from the infidel. Ahmed Resmi, for instance, has one Ottoman official flatly stating "The Tatar is a Muslim. Of course he must be helped."[24] The sen-

[21] According to a contemporary Ottoman report entitled 'Report on the Conquest of the Crimea by the Infidels', during this period "Those who were well off and wealthy boarded vessels near the shore and left for Anatolia and other places." "Zapiski Mukhameda Nedzhati Efendi Turetskago Plenago v Rossii." *Russkaia Starina*. January. 1894. p. 115.

[22] Arsenii Markevich. "Pereseleniia Krymskhikh Tatar v Turtsiiu v Sviazi s Dvizheniem Naseleniia v Krymy." *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk SSR* 1928. pp. 378-379.

[23] Ibid. p. 380.

[24] Virginia Aksan. *An Ottoman Statesman in War and Peace*. Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1995. p. 172.

se of Islamic solidarity between the Crimean Tatars and Ottomans was clearly manifested after the Ottomans signed the humiliating Treaty of Jassy in 1792. In this treaty the Ottoman Porte grudgingly acknowledged Russian rule over the Crimea after suffering several defeats in the Russo-Turkish War of 1787-1792 (fought, for the most part, to liberate the Crimea from infidel rule).

As news of the treaty reached the Crimea there was a mass migration of Tatars from the Crimea to the lands of the Sultan as many Crimean Muslims saw their last hope of living under Muslim rule dashed. Interestingly enough, the majority of those involved in this, the first of two mass Crimean out-migrations, were the "whimsical" Nogai nomads of the steppe.[25] The vast scale of this migration which, according to Edward Lazzerini, is realistically estimated to have consisted of roughly 100,000 emigrants, lead to the formation of the first significant Crimean Tatar diaspora enclaves in Anatolia and increased the Tatar population already inhabiting the Ottoman Balkan provinces.[26]

Pavel Sumarokov estimates the number of immigrants from this period to have been 300,000,[27] but this is considered an inflated number.[28] As to unsubstantiated claims by Sumarokov that more than 300,000 Crimean Tatars left during this great migration, Markevich claims that neither the Turks nor the Tatars had the means of transportation to carry out such a large operation. According to this account "The resettlement in two to three years of several million people on the sea route from the Crimea to Turkey represents the fruit of extraordinary fantasy.[29]

At the end of the migration, Markevich claims that between 170,000 and 180,000 Crimean Tatars were all that remained in the Crimea from an annexation period population of approximately 300,0000.[30] Mystified Russian officials could not fully explain the process that saw whole villages in the steppes abandoned and, more often than not, passed this strange movement off as yet another

[25] Arsenii Markevich. op. cit. no. 22. p. 388.

[26] Edward Lazzerini. "The Crimea Under Russian Rule. 1783 to the Great Reforms." *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*. ed. Michael Rywkin. London; Mansell Publishing. p. 126. For a figure of 100,000.

[27] Pavel Sumarokov. *Dosugi Krymskago Sud'i ili Vtoroe Puteshestvie v Tavridy*. St. Petersburg; Imperatorskoi Tipograf. part 1. 1803. p. 161.

[28] Hakan Kirimli.op. cit. no. 1. p. 9.

[29] Markevich. op. cit. no. 22. p 388.

[30] Ibid.

example of Tatar fanaticism. Even the most cursory of accounts from this period, however, could not have failed to reveal that the Crimean Tatars' centuries old way of life had been seriously disrupted by Russian colonial rule in the years prior to the 1792 Jassy agreement.

As has been previously noted, much of the reason for this collapse and the mass abandonment of the Crimean Peninsula could actually be found in cultural differences between the Crimea's Muslim population and Russian landowners and settlers. In particular, the sources point to vastly differing concepts of land ownership which were held by the Russian administrators on the one hand and the Crimean Muslims who viewed links to land through the prism of traditionalist Islam on the other hand. To understand the reasons for the unprecedented out-migration of the Crimea's indigenous population one must first analyze the role that Islam played in shaping the Crimean Tatars' group identity and their concepts of land and homeland.

The Role of Islam in Shaping Traditional Crimean Tatar Identity

In the Crimea, as in other parts of the pre-modern Islamic world, Islam functioned as more than just a religion for the Muslim Tatars. Islam provided the Crimea's Muslims with a moral, cultural, judicial, and societal framework and shaped their views of themselves and their concepts of land and homeland. Alexandre Bennigsen's description of Islam's role in shaping Muslim collective identities, for example, certainly applied to the Crimean Muslims of the 18th and 19th centuries. According to Bennigsen:

> Islam itself is not merely a religion. It encompasses not only a corpus of directly religious beliefs and rites, but also a complex aggregate of cultural, psychological and social traditions, attitudes, and customs governing the whole way of life of the Muslim community. Its 'rooting' in every level of society is certainly deeper than that of any other religion of the world, and many traditions, attitudes and customs of Islam are not contingent on the strict observance of the faith.[31]

[31] Alexandre Bennigsen. "Several Nations or One People. Ethnic Consciousness Among Soviet Central Asian Muslims." *Central Asian Survey*. Summer 1979. vol. 24. no. 3 (108). p. 53.

Islam, and the culture it embodied, permeated every aspect of the 18th and 19th century Crimean Muslims' world and, in the words of Lemercier Quelquejay, provided this pre-modern people "with a surrogate sense of national identity."[32] Prior to their conquest by the Russians, for example, *kadis* (Islamic judges) adjudicated in *shariah* (Islamic law) courts throughout the Crimean countryside; Crimean Tatar children learned to recite the Qur'an in Arabic in *mektebs* (primary schools) and older students traveled to the great *medreses* of Istanbul, or to the renowned Zinjirli *Medrese* in Bahçesaray to study the Qur'an and *hadiths* (precedents of the Prophet Mohammed).

The village mosque (often a simple, stone structure with a small minaret) served as the center of Tatar communal life and was one of the most visible outward symbols of a village's communal Muslim identity.[33] Here the faithful came on Fridays to pray, to hear news of the outside world, and to exchange gossip. Village *mullahs* (the lower Islamic 'clergy') performed life rituals here that were so vital to the maintenance of the Muslim communal identity, such as marriages, funerals, sacrifices and circumcisions, and were held in great respect throughout the Crimean countryside. After living in the south Crimean city of Karagoss from 1816-1820, an English observer, Mary Holderness, mentioned, for example, that "The *mullah* is considered the head of every parish, and nothing of consequence to the community is undertaken without his counsel."[34]

Islam and its venerated representatives had always wielded considerable influence among the Crimea's Muslim populace and, in some respects, this authority appears to have actually increased in the decades following the Russian annexation of the Crimea. This, in part, stems from the fact that the Crimean Tatars' traditional tribal aristocracy (the *mirza* and *bey* families) had become completely co-opted by the Russian government and had ceased to function in the role Henry Howorth ascribes to them in his classic work as "tri-

[32] Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay. "From Tribe to Umma." *Central Asian Survey*. vol. 3. no. 3. p. 15.

[33] Most of these simple village mosques were destroyed after the deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944.

[34] Mary Holderness. *New Russia. A Journey from Riga to Crimea*. London; Sherwood Jones and co. 1823. p. 218. Edward Clarke similarly observed that "An *Imaum* (Tatar, *'Imam'* leader in public worship) who wears a green turban, and who is generally the schoolmaster, is in every village." Edward Clarke. *Travels to Russia Tatary and Turkey*. New York; 1907. p. 313.

bunes to defend the laws of the Kirim and liberties of its people."[35] On the contrary, the *mirza* class gave its loyalty to the Tsarist regime as a means of maintaining its cherished *dvorianstvo* (nobility) status and extending its control over the common Crimean Tatar peasantry.[36]

Contemporary Crimean Tatar accounts indicate that, for the common Crimean Tatar peasant, the *mirza* class had symbolically abandoned its ethnic community by adopting the ways of the Russian *dvorianstvo* class. The following *destan* (legend-ballad) from the 19th century Crimea clearly captures the Crimean Muslim peasants' attitude towards the Russian colonial administration and their own obsequious aristocracy, the *mirza* or *ağa* (Tatar 'lord') class. Like many of the laments sung by the Tatars (who were known for their love of music) this *destan* also expresses the sense of despair that many landless Tatar peasants felt as they were increasingly displaced in the Crimea's steppe lands by Russian landlords.

They say the Crimea has one ruler,
The consequence is the destruction of the Crimea,
All the *mirzas* are the people's enemy,
From the Lord I expect help and I cry for the Crimea,

The Crimean nobility have become loyal to Moscow,
For God's sake they have donned the tasseled hat (of the Russian),
They have sold our young men to Moscow,
From the Lord I expect help and I cry for the Crimea,

The Crimea is encircled with gardens,
We are separated from our compatriots, from our friends,
We are leaving the *Yeşil Yurt* (Green Homeland),
From the Lord I expect help and I cry for the Crimea,

At the head of the mountains there was mist,
The situation in the Crimea has worsened,
For God's sake the flowers have withered,
From the Lord I expect help and I cry for the Crimea,

It was in vain, it was in vain,
The flesh was cooked by the fire
The *mirzas* and *ağas* were the reason
From the Lord I expect help and I cry for the Crimea.[37]

[35] Henry Howorth. *The History of the Mongols*. vol. 2. London; Longman, Green and co. 1880. p. 612.
[36] Hakan Kirimli. op. cit. no. 1. p. 13.
[37] Altan Arash. "Kirim Türklerinin Muhacir Türküleri ve Halk Destanlari" *Emel*. Jan.-Feb. no. 56. 1970. p. 28.

With the re-orientation of the *mirzas'* loyalty to Russia after the Russian annexation of the Crimea, the Muslim peasants lost their primary source of secular leadership. This was clearly an intended result of Tsarist policy and was carried out throughout conquered territories in the Russian Empire as a means of preventing potential rebellions. To a certain extent the upper Islamic clergy of the Crimea was also co-opted by the Russian provincial administration which began to pay their salaries and administer the vast *vakıf* system on which they depended for their income. While the highest clergy, including the *müfti* (head jurist of the Muslim clergy) in Simferopol, were appointed by the Russian colonial administration, many unregistered village *mullahs* continued to be chosen by their communities and were able to maintain their popular authority among the Crimean *umma*. As the Russian presence made itself increasingly felt in the Crimean countryside during the 19th century, many Crimean Muslims turned to this last source of communal identity and leadership left to them to avoid assimilation by the Christian Russians.[38]

19th century Russian and Western accounts of the Crimea make repeated references to the Islamic bases of Crimean Tatar identity and a picture emerges of an ethno-religious community whose society was firmly grounded in spirituality. Most sources agree that "In the Crimea Islam was alive as a faith and held the allegiance of the Crimeans in practically all aspects of their life."[39] With the Russian conquest, the daily rituals of Islam in fact became important markers of group and individual identity for the Crimean Muslims and were consciously used to distinguish the Tatar Muslims from the Russian or Ukrainian Christians.[40]

The ancient capital of Bahçesaray became the center of 19th century Crimean Islam and visitors to its hallowed mosques and dervish *tekkes* (monasteries for ascetic *sufi*-mystic brotherhoods) found

[38] This appears to have conformed with the colonial regime's wishes for, according to Alan Fisher, Russian policy in the Crimea "insisted that only a sense of traditional religious identity remain intact." Alan Fisher. "Social and Legal Aspects of Russian-Muslim Relations in the Nineteenth Century, the Case of the Crimean Tatars." *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian World; The East European Pattern*. ed. Abraham Ascher et. al. New York; Columbia Univ. Press. 1979. p. 85.
[39] Alan Fisher. "Enlightened Despotism and Islam Under Catherine II". *Slavic Review*. Vol. 27, no. 4 Dec. 1968. p. 547.
[40] F.A. Fedorov. *Krym s Sevastopolem' Balaklavoiu*. St. Petersburg; Korableva and Siriakova. 1855. p. 48.

a people who had, in the face of Russian colonization of their lands, increasingly turned inward to their Islamic beliefs as a means of establishing barriers between themselves and the surrounding Christian Slavic population. Islam offered the Crimean Tatars their only codified body of rituals, beliefs, taboos and customs which could enable them to maintain a distinct communal identity and avoid Russification. This had been the fate of many similar, small ethnic groups in the Volga region (most of whom were animist, such as the Mari) who became assimilated by the Russians during the previous centuries. As in other Muslim provinces of the Russian Empire, intermarriage between the indigenous Muslim population of the Crimea and Slavic peasants, soldiers and landowners was unheard of and endogamy was ingrained in the 19th century Crimean Muslim culture as a defensive mechanism.

During the 19th century, relations between the Crimean Muslims and the Russian rulers came to resemble those found in other regions of the Islamic world where Western colonial powers attempted to regulate and rule sullen Muslim populations; be it in Austrian-occupied Bosnia, French Algeria or British Sindh.[41] The Christian outsider became for the Crimean Muslim the salient 'Other' and the Crimean Tatars increasingly identified themselves by their cultural traditions that were distinctly non Russian-Orthodox and uniquely Islamic (such as the wearing of a fez, or turban; celebrating Muslim festivals; attending mosque on Fridays etc.).

Islamic Notions of Territory and Homeland Among the Crimean Tatars

Considering the centrality of Islam in shaping the *Weltanschauung* of the Crimean Muslim peasant in the 18th and 19th centuries, it is not surprising that the Crimean Tatar community also imagined itself to be part of the larger Muslim continuum, the *umma*. It was this macro identification (or an overlapping micro identification with a home village, tribe or valley) that provided the 19th century Crimean Muslim with his or her primary source of personal identification

[41] Concerning this period, William McNeil writes, "the rank and file would not abandon Islam and their past; nor could Tartar family systems, land law, class lines, and other customary relationships be fitted into the Russian mold without ceasing to be Tartar." William McNeill. *Europe's Steppe Frontier.* Chicago; University of Chicago Press 1964. p. 198.

rather than an articulated sense of nationality. As with the Christian and Muslim populations of the Balkans and Caucasus it was this sense of parochial affiliation with a village/sub-region, or a wider identification with a sectarian community, that also forged the Crimean Muslims' sense of group identity.

Among the divergent Crimean Muslim population of the three separate zones of the peninsula there was in fact no over-arching, communal sense of *political* identity on the basis of ethnicity during this early period. Nor was there any political discourse stressing this people's unique claim to the Crimea as a 'Fatherland' or ethnically-based patrimony. The failure of Khan Şahin Giray to unite the Crimean Tatars in his state building project (which would have certainly accelerated the development of a Crimean Tatar national identity more than direct colonial rule by Russia) provided clear evidence for the lack of any broad unity among the Crimean Muslims on the basis of their shared ethnicity. From the Russian perspective the Crimean Muslims were considered a peasant *class* not a nation and the Crimea, far from being constructed as a Tatar homeland, was simply seen an undeveloped province in the Russian Empire.

This is not surprising when one recalls that the Western political ideology of nationalism—which posits that all ethno-linguistic groups with a shared history, culture and territory form a 'nation' and have a 'natural' right to a specific territory (defined variously as a national 'homeland' or 'fatherland')—was only just being formulated in Western Europe. The lack of ethno-national, political identification among the Crimean Muslims was certainly not unique in this East European Muslim context.

Not surprisingly, the Crimean Muslim peasants of this period also tended to view their community, and its links to land, in distinctly Islamic terms. This was never more evident than in the names given to the Tatar villages which dotted the Crimean Peninsula. Crimean Tatar villages, such as Islam Terek (The River of Islam), Ak Mecit (White Mosque) Haji Bulat (Bulat the Pilgrim), Ak Sheikh (The White Sheikh, i.e. head of a dervish order), Ak Hoja (White Hoja) and Seit Elin (Saint Elin) were named for local mosques, religious figures or miracles associated with Crimean Islam.

As in other parts of the Muslim world there was among the Crimean Muslims of this period also a dualistic division of land between the *Dar al-Harb* (Abode of War) and the *Dar al-Islam* (Abode of Is-

lam). The Hanafi school of Sunni Islam, to which the Crimean Muslims subscribed, was very clear on the obligations of the true believer in relation to these concepts. Islamic doctrine bluntly stated that "the *Dar al-Islam* becomes the *Dar al-Harb* after conquest by unbelievers, if the laws of the unbelievers are enforced."[42] This was certainly the case in the Crimea where the *shariah* (Islamic law) courts lost their authority soon after the Russian conquest.

Having come to see a land as *Dar al-Harb*, Bernard Lewis states that "it was the duty of all Muslims, men, women, and children alike, to leave such territories, for it was against God's law for Muslims to remain under non-Muslim rule."[43] The Muslim theologian Al-Wansharissi (d. 1508) called on Muslims to emigrate from the land of the infidel to safeguard their beliefs and prevent the perversion of their faith. Living in the land of the unbelievers, this source claimed, might lead to such bad habits as marrying non-Muslims, adopting their customs and forgetting such important rituals as *namaz* (public worship), *zakat* (alms giving), *hijra* (pilgrimage to Mecca) etc. According to Al-Wansharissi "A person who refuses to emigrate abandons the community."[44] Islamic jurists in the Crimea would certainly have been aware of judicial precedents of this sort made throughout the Sunni Muslim world.

Far from articulating a unique ethnic right or claim to the Crimea as the 18th and 19th century Crimean Tatars' sacred *Vaterland* or *patrie*, the widely accepted tenants of Hanafi Islam therefore seems to have actually dictated that the Crimean Peninsula (as a land where the laws of the unbeliever prevailed over the *shariah*) was to be abandoned by all pious Muslims.[45] In emigrating from the *Dar al-Harb* to preserve their religious identity the Crimea's Muslims were in fact participating in a sanctified Islamic tradition known as *hijra* (religious emigration) established by the Prophet Mohammed himself.[46]

[42] Mohammad Reza Djalili. "Dar al-Harb." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*. Oxford; Oxford Univ. Press. 1995. p. 338.

[43] Bernard Lewis. *The Political Language of Islam*. Chicago; Univ. of Chicago Press. 1988. p. 105.

[44] Sami Aldeeb Abu Sahlieh. "The Islamic Conception of Migration." *International Migration Review*. Vol. 30. no.1. Spring. 1996. p. 48.

[45] Muhammad Khalid Masud. "The Obligation to Migrate: the Doctrine of Hijra in Islamic Law." *Muslim Travelers, Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination*. ed. Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori. London; Routledge 1990. pp. 38-39.

[46] W. Montgomery Watt. *Muhammad at Mecca*. Oxford; Oxford Univ. Press. 1953. p. 110.

Many devout Crimean Muslims must have felt that Russian settlement threatened the fabric of their traditional Islamic way of life and *hijra* was increasingly seen as the most desirable option when economic and political conditions in the Crimea began to deteriorate. Muslims in other parts of the Islamic world during the 19th century were also facing this issue and Islamic jurists in both the heartlands of Islam and its frontiers were forced to negotiate with the unexpected intrusion of infidel rule in the lands of the *Dar al-Islam*. While the Ottoman *ulema* do not appear to have issued any *fetwas* (opinions or decisions based on Islamic law) calling for *hijra* from the Russian Empire, it is clear from 19th century accounts that many village *mullahs* in the Crimea supported the idea.

Hakan Kirimli eloquently sums up the 19th century Crimean Muslims' perceptions of homeland, stating:

> The feeling of 'temporary residence' in their own homelands was one of the most important factors which hampered the development of the notion of *patria* and territorially-defined nationhood in the modern sense among the Crimean Tatars. Notwithstanding the fact that the nostalgia of the Crimean Tatar emigrants, who obviously left the land of their ancestors involuntarily, lasted for generations as many of them continued to identify themselves with their origins, within the Crimea self-identification with the land and background hardly evolved during the nineteenth century, when existence in the Crimea was apparently considered as living at the 'wrong time and in the wrong place' due to extra-territorial allegiances of religion and culture which were still defined not in ideological but in vague traditional terms.[47]

The Ottoman 'Domain of Islam' as an Imagined Homeland

These Islamic notions of land and community must certainly not be seen as providing the Crimea's Muslim population with the *sole* catalyst for abandoning their ancient lands, but they certainly sanctioned (and even encouraged) out-migration from the peninsula to the Ottoman Empire as an outward demonstration of Islamic piety. The Muslim Ottoman Empire was of course the natural destination for *muhacirs* (religious emigrants) during this period. In Tatar sources the Ottoman Empire was simply known as the *Memleket-i Islam* (Dominion of Islam), the *Memalik-i Mahrusa* (The Well Protected

[47] Hakan Kirimli. op. cit. no. 1. p. 8.

Realms) or *Devlet-i Aliye* (Exalted Realm) and for most Crimean Muslims the Sultan's realm was synonymous with the *Dar al-Islam.* Kirimli writes "Traditionally, the primary interest of the average Crimean Tatar in Turkey was the religious one, as this was the principle basis of his own self-identification. No doubt, the Ottoman Empire, as the seat of the Caliph, held a certain mystical significance for him."[48]

This notion was actively promoted by the Ottoman government following the ratification of the 1774 treaty of Küçük Kaynarça, which placed the Crimean Peninsula under Russian political control but granted the Ottoman Sultan religious authority over the Crimea's Muslim population in his capacity as Caliph. From this period onward, the Ottoman Sultan began to exert his claim to be Caliph of the Sunni Muslim world, a title that the Ottomans had (theoretically) acquired by right of conquest after Sultan Selim I's subjugation of Mamluk Egypt in 1517. The Ottoman Sultan-Caliph's religious appeal to the Muslim world of the 19th century, (which spread to the Muslim population of British India, the Russian vassal states of Central Asia, the Volga Tatar region, the Caucasus, Kashgaria, Dutch Indonesia and French North Africa) was based, to a considerable extent, upon the fact that the Ottoman Sultan was the last major Sunni Muslim ruler to avoid conquest by a Christian colonial power.

For the 19th Century Crimean Muslim, the Ottoman Caliph across the Black Sea was the 'Defender of the Faithful', the 'Shadow of God on Earth', and the 'Vicar of the Prophet.' Tremendous symbolic and spiritual importance was given to the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph by the increasingly isolated Crimean Muslim enclave as Russian settlement progressed in the peninsula. As the loss of land to Slavic-Christian settlers increasingly disturbed the rhythms of the Crimean Muslims' patriarchal way of life, tales of the wonderful conditions found in the lands of the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph began to circulate among the Tatar villages of the Crimea.

By the 19th century informal, grass roots movements that were millenarian in nature had begun to periodically appear among the simple Tatar peasants in the Crimea. These popular movements often stressed nostalgia for the pre-Russian period and extolled migration to the lands of the Caliph as a means of escaping the harsh reality

[48] Hakkan Kirimli. op. cit. no 1. p. 150.

of Russian rule. In many ways the *destans*, laments and songs of this period, are similar to the *zar zaman* ('difficult times') ballads of the 19th century Kazakh bards who lamented the disruption of their nomadic way of life by Russian settlers and officials.[49] As the Russians began to conquer the last of the independent Muslim highlander peoples of the Caucasus in the mid 19th century, such as the Chechens, Ingush and Circassians, similar movements also spread in the mountain *auls* of this region and led to the rise of virulently anti-Russian spiritual movements among the mountaineers (the most famous being Sheikh Shamil's *Muridist* guerrilla movement among the Avars, Kumyks and Chechens which lasted until 1859).[50]

Songs and poems from the Crimea of this period often extolled the sacredness of the cherished *ak toprak* (literally 'white soil' or 'white land') of the Ottoman Empire, a term with great religious symbolism for Crimean Muslims. For this religious community, the 'white soil' of the sultan's empire was pure or blessed earth.[51] Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861-1876) was the first Ottoman Sultan to actively present the Ottoman Empire as a haven for Muslims (and even non-Muslims such as Russian Old Believers, Polish Confederates and Zaporozhian Cossacks), a fact that is important to take into consideration when analyzing the massive post-Crimean War migrations of the Crimean Tatars in 1860-61 to the Ottoman Empire. One should also take into account the Crimean Tatars' long history of service in the lands of the Ottoman Empire and the sense of historical, ethnic and religious continuity a Tatar would have felt in the lands of the related Muslim Turks.

[49] Shirin Akiner. *The Formation of Kazakh Identity. From Tribe to Nation-State.* London; Royal Institute of International Affairs. 1995 p. 31.

[50] Brian Glyn Williams, "Shamil." *Encyclopedia of Nationalism.* vol. 2. ed. Alexander Motyl. Academic Press. 2000.

[51] While the Ottoman Porte had officially offered sanctuary on its soil to Muslims fleeing oppression in the *Dar al-Harb* since the 1672 Treaty of Buczacz (which gave Polish Muslim-Tatars the right to asylum in the Ottoman Empire), this policy became an active factor in Ottoman policy only during the Ottoman retreat from the Balkans in the 19th century. Zygmunt Abrahamovic. "Turcology in Poland: Achievements and Some Problems for Future Developments." *International Journal of Turkish Studies.* Winter 1984-1985. Vol. 3, no. 1. p. 126.

Russian Land Expropriations in the Crimea as a Catalyst for Emigration

19th century Russian and Western sources support the notion that the Crimea's Muslim population had a certain sense of extraterritoriality based on religious notions of land that would have predisposed them to emigration. These accounts make it clear that there were certain societal factors operating *within* 18th and 19th century Crimean Muslim society ('fanaticism' in Russian parlance) that would have predisposed this pre-modern, religiously-defined populace to abandon their villages and homes if external factors compounded matters and created a hostile or untenable environment. The Russian confiscations of Tatar lands and displacement of the indigenous peasants from many areas of the peninsula provided just such an external stimulus. That the Crimean Tatars did suffer from unprecedented dispossession of land during this period is beyond dispute. Contemporary Russian sources are replete with descriptions of the process that saw the Crimean Tatar peasants' land expropriated by *pomeshchiks*, particularly during the 19th century.

From the start of the 19th century, economic specialization proceeded apace in the Crimea as large Russian magnates began to exploit the region's resources in order to produce export products such as wool, tallow, wheat and wine. The mixed, sustenance economy of the Crimean Tatars was gradually replaced as *pomeshchiks* gained control of broad swaths of peasant lands and devoted them to the production of a single export product. In the plains to the north of the Crimea, the Nogais' migration routes were disrupted as Slavic settlers began plowing the lands of the sparsely populated steppe for agricultural development. In half a century, the open steppe in fact became the home to tens of thousands of Slavic peasants who systematically exploited this region and transformed the Pontic plains into the Empire's grain basket.

It was these economic transformations that initially caused perhaps the greatest disruptions in Crimean Tatar society, not overtly anti-Tatar governmental policies. Dave Lynch bluntly summarized this process of economic transition noting that, for the Nogais and Tatars of the southern Ukraine "The second half of the eighteenth century was a period when one pattern of human activity gave way to another."[52] Seen from the larger perspective of Slavic expansion

[52] Dave Lynch. *The Conquest, Settlement and Initial Development of New Russia (The Southern Third of the Ukraine): 1780-1837.* New Haven; Yale Univ. 1965. p. vii.

into the Black Sea basin and north Caucasian plain, another historian has pointed out that, in the Crimea "As with the colonization of other relatively under populated areas by other Western powers, the native inhabitants tended to get pushed aside."[53]

Richard Pierce cautions against interpreting this process through the lenses of modern notions of human rights and protection of minorities and points out that "The idea that it is unethical for one people to control the destiny of another has come late in the development of the human social conscience."[54] For most Russian settlers, landowners and officials, the colonization of the lands of the Tatars was as natural as the White Europeans' expansion into the 'open lands' of the native American 'Indians.'

The average Crimean Tatar peasant of the 18th and 19th century would certainly not have seen the loss of his ancestral lands in such broad historical terms nor did many liberal Russian and West European observers, who sympathized with the Crimean Tatars' increasingly untenable position in the Crimea. In his insightful account, General Tolteben, the Russian commander whose name was to be forever linked to the heroic defense of Sevastopol in the Crimean War, mentioned the gradual loss of Crimean land by the Tatar peasants stating:

> The *pomeshchiks*, with the help of the local authorities, thus frequently appropriated for themselves, land belonging to the Tatars; on the state lands Tatar land was mortgaged without the knowledge of its owners. Proof of this can be seen in the fact that 30 years ago in the Crimea there were almost no landowners other than free Tatars and persons possessing gardens on the southern shore and in the river valleys; now, however, the greater part of the land in the Crimea belongs to the *pomeshchiks* and the Tatars living on it have been practically turned into serfs.[55]

Throughout the 19th century, Russian *pomeshchiks*, German, Bulgarian and other settlers attracted to the Empire's 'open lands' in the Crimean steppe used the simple Crimean Muslim peasantry's lack of knowledge of Russian language and laws to expropriate Tatar land throughout the Crimea. While several of the Crimea's enlightened

[53] Anthony Rhinelander. *Prince Michael Vorntsov. Viceroy to the Tsar. Montreal.* McGill Univ. Press. p. 233. n. 40.

[54] Richard Pierce. *Russian Central Asia, 1867-1917. A Study in Colonial Rule.* Berkeley. University of California. 1960. p. 1.

[55] E.I. Totleben. "O Vyselenii Tatar iz Kryma v 1860 gody." *Russkaia Starina.* June 1893. p. 535.

governors enacted commissions aimed at codifying the Tatars' rights to land, these were largely unsuccessful and, in most cases, the Tatar peasants had little recourse in the law. The lack of codified laws defining the Crimean Tatar peasants' labor duties *(barshchina)* and rights to land allowed Crimean *pomeshchiks* to exploit the local peasantry and dispossess it of much of the finest agricultural land in the peninsula. A recent account of this process claims:

> The peasants were forced, without a murmur to agree since their position was worse than even Russian peasants. The Tatars had absolutely no rights to the land and lived in constant fear that some enraged landlord could expel them. If in Russia the peasant had one master, then the personally free Tatars did not belong to anyone, but to all the neighboring *pomeshchiks*, who often jointly exploited one village which lay on the boundary of their possessions.[56]

In his 19th century article dealing with the causes for the Crimean Tatar migrations to the Ottoman Empire, Levitskii points to the lack of clear land tenure laws for the Crimean Tatars as a root cause for instability among the Crimea's Muslim peasantry. Levitskii writes:

> In no other place can one find such ugly, bare force, and willful inhuman cruelty as in the duties on the departing Tatar population in the Crimea. The lack of clarity and the disorder prevailing in this region surpasses belief. The owners, officials and administrators of state properties, the local village authorities and land police, from small to big, scourge without halt the poor Muslim population of this region and drive it to despair. They have found no succor and have been driven into poverty.[57]
>
> It has been said that no other people, not even our Russian population, could have endured without murmur or obvious resistance the ten-score insults and injustices endured by the Tatars.[58]

This situation resulted, in part, from the local Russian nobility's attitudes towards the Crimean Muslim peasantry. Mark Pinson claims that "while the Russian peasantry tended to be under one lord, the Tatars constituted a labor pool on which all the local gentry felt free to draw."[59] Furthermore, large landowners did not hesitate to drive

[56] V.E. Vozgrin. *Istoricheskie Sud'by Krymskikh Tatar.* Moscow; Mysl'. 1992. p. 281.
[57] Levitskii. op. cit. no. 19. p. 615.
[58] Ibid. p. 603.
[59] Mark Pinson. "Russian Policy and the Emigration of the Crimean Tatars to the Ottoman Empire 1854-1862." *Güney-Dogu Avrupa Araştmaları Dergisi.* no. 1. 1972. p. 40.

off the populations of Tatar villages on their vast estates if it suited their economic needs. A 19th century source writes:

> It should be stated that examples of the expulsion of Tatars, in which nothing is spared, are seen by us in the Crimea frequently; people are driven from the cottages built by their forefathers without any compassion in winter, in the cold frost. This, for example, recently occurred in the Feodosiia district. *Ağa* Celebi expelled all the Tatars living and working on his land as a result of their unwillingness to fulfill his demands of increased work requirements. As recently as a few months ago one Russian landowner expelled an entire Tatar village from its land in Simferopol.[60]

The Impact of Russian Colonial Rule on the Steppe Nogais and Southern Tats

The lack of secure land tenure rights, the displacement from traditional areas of cultivation (especially on the Crimean steppe inhabited by herders who were seen as having less of a claim to land), the increase in taxes and duties owed to landlords and the loss of free access to the Crimea's forests and water sources seriously disrupted the indigenous production system in the 19th century Crimea. Hommaire de Hell provides an in-depth survey of the economic decline experienced by the 19th century Crimean Tatars in the Russian Empire. This eyewitness claimed that Russian policies in the Crimea destroyed much of the foundations for the Crimean Tatars' ancient means of production. According to de Hell:

> ...we have seen that the Tatars, when they first occupied the country, were distinguished for their agricultural and industrial labors, whether it was in consequence of their mixture with the old races, or merely of the propitious climate; they also employed themselves with such success in gardening and the cultivation of the vine and of corn, that the Crimea under the khans was considered one of the chief regions whence Constantinople drew its supplies...
>
> We believe, therefore, that under a better system it would have been easy to revive the laborious disposition of the Tatars by facilitating and encouraging commercial transactions, and gradually effacing the disheartening apprehensions under which the Mussulman population have naturally labored since their great calamities befell them.[61]

[60] M. Goldenberg. "Krym i Krymskie Tatary." *Vestnik Evropy.* no. 6. 1883. p. 80.
[61] Hommaire de Hell. op. cit. no. 11. p. 69.

The situation of the Nogai Tatars on the Crimean steppe was particularly tragic in the 19th century as the pasture lands that sustained their pastoral way of life were gradually expropriated for intensive farming or settled with Slavic peasants by powerful *pomeshchiks*. After visiting the Crimean steppe just prior to the Crimean War of 1853-56, Charles Koch wrote of this region:

> Since the Russians have taken possession of the Crimea, the Tatars have given up a portion of their land—and that generally the best—to foreign settlers....Wherever a spring gushed forth from the ground, the prospect was more pleasing and verdant. But such fertile spots—real oases—are of no service to the Tatars, the original owners of the Crimea, for, as they had no permanent residence, the Russians declared it to be unwanted land and seized it.[62]

Most 19th century sources point out that the Nogais of the steppe were exposed to intensive colonial exploitation during this period. Famine, scurvy, trachoma and other sicknesses were frequently reported among this increasingly destitute population.[63] Histories of the Crimea from the early (pre-deportation) Soviet period provide a resounding condemnation of the Nogais' treatment at the hands of 'bourgeoisie Tsarist exploiters' during the 19th century. An account from 1930, for example, claims "Not having, for the most part, written documents for land, the steppe Tatars appeared as landless peasants. All the land belonged to the *pomeshchiks*-Russians, Greeks, Karaims and Tatar *mirzas*. All the *pomeshchiks* exploited the peasants in a most shameless fashion: for the right to live and work on *pomeshchik* land the peasant carried a very heavy burden of duties."[64]

While there were land confiscations in the Tats' lands in the south, the specialized agriculture of the Yaliboyu Tatars was more capable of adopting to the developing market economy of 19th century Russia.[65] Although the Tats of the south did not suffer from displacement and loss of land to the same degree as the Nogais of the steppe, they tended to suffer from more subtle landlord encroachments. Among the most damaging of Russian infringements on tra-

[62] Charles Koch. *The Crimea from Kertch to Perekop*. London; G. Routledge. 1855. pp. 23-24.
[63] B. M. Vol'fson. "Emigratsiia Krymskikh Tatar v 1860 g." *Istoricheskie Zapiski*. no. 9. 1940. pp. 186-197.
[64] V. Ovseichika et. al. *Krym. Chrestomatiia po Istorii Kraia*. Simferopol; Krymskoe Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo. 1930. p. 111.
[65] Hakan Kirimli. op. cit. no. 1. p. 18.

ditional agrarian practices of the coastal Tat-Tatars was the loss of the right to freely access and utilize the all-important communal wells and forest lands in the southern mountains. In his eyewitness account, Goldenberg wrote of the *pomeshchiks'* control of the Crimea water supply "They encroached not only on the land, but even on the water; running water, necessary for watering plots and gardens, but also for watering holes, was diverted without hindrance into special reservoirs and returned to its former channels only in exchange for a specific sum."[66]

In addition, the forests of the Crimean coast around the Çadir Dağ massive became a royal preserve and the Tatars were forbidden from hunting or gathering wood in its foothills. General Totleben gave a description of the Crimean Tatars' loss of rights to the forests claiming:

> Many forests, through inheritance or purchase, belonged to Tatars living on state lands and they used it at their discretion, they sold firewood and used the forests for their requirements. When the ministry of state property, however, with the aim of preserving the forests established guardianship over the forests, the result of the decree was that the Tatars owning forests as private property suddenly lost the right to use their property, because they lived on state land, and in this fashion they, together with their property, became the property of the state.[67]

The Tatar communes of the Yaliboyu coast and Yaila mountains waged a continuous legal battle to maintain the possession of their hereditary lands from the encroachments of the *pomeshchiks* and Levitskii claimed "there is almost no village in the mountainous area and on the southern shore that does not have a dispute over the possession by the Tatars over private land."[68] The legal battle between the Tatars of the Baidar Valley and *pomeshchiks* of the famed Admiral Mordvinov's family (who claimed that the Tatars were "unsuited to occupy and live on the land") actually lasted from the 1700s up to the time of the Russian Revolution![69]

It should be noted that in all of these land seizures, the Russian *pomeshchik* was not to be outdone by the pliant Tatar *mirza* who competed with his Russian "brothers of class" to exploit the Crimea's

[66] Goldenberg. op. cit. no. 58. p. 70.
[67] E.I. Totleben. "O Vyselenii Tatar iz Kryma v 1860 godu" *Russkaia Starina*. June 1893. p. 535.
[68] Levitskii. op. cit. no. 19. p. 600.
[69] Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 55. p. 303.

Muslim peasantry.[70] Far from providing their downtrodden ethnic kin with a source of secular leadership, the "emasculated" and "servile" Tatar *mirzas* identified first and foremost with the Russian administration which sanctioned their nobility privileges.[71] In this fashion the Crimean Tatar peasantry was deprived of a source of communal leadership that, in another setting, might have defended their rights to land and led the Muslim peasantry in forging a defensive national identity of the sort then unifying the Christian nations of the Balkans. Far from seeing the Crimean Tatars as a *nation* with a proud history and culture, it becomes glaringly obvious that the Russian administration and the indigenous Tatar leadership saw the Crimea's Muslim peasantry as a peasant class to be exploited and taxed.

While it was the village commune of the Tatar peasant class that suffered the most from increased exploitation and land confiscation, it must also be mentioned that the Crimea's extensive *vakıf* estates were also expropriated at a steady pace during the 19th century. In 1783, *vakıf* estates in the Crimea consisted of 460,000 hectares of land but by 1917 only 100,000 hectares of this remained.[72] The loss of this important community fund, which had for centuries supported *mektebs*, *medreses*, mosques, fountains, dervish hostels and other cultural institutions in the Crimea, took a heavy toll on the 19th century Crimean Tatars' intellectual development. Of much more pressing concern for the average Tatar farmer, however was the loss of this vast communal reserve of workable land associated with *vakıfs*.[73]

Not surprisingly, Tatar sources from the Turkish-Balkan and Central Asian diasporas see the confiscation of the Crimean Tatars' national heritage, the *vakıf* and *cemaat* lands of their forefathers, as part of a deliberate Russian policy which aimed to make the maintenance of a Muslim presence in the Crimea virtually impossible. Ethem Feyzi Gözaydin's account of the Tatars' loss of Crimean land is typical of the accounts from Tatars of Turkey. Gözaydin's description of the land dispossession suffered by the Tatars in the 19th century can be seen as representative of a whole genre of commu-

[70] Ibid. p.280.

[71] Edward Lazzerini. "The Crimea Under Russian Rule 1783 to the Great Reforms." *Russian Colonial Expansion to 1917*. Ed. Michael Rywkin. New York; Mansell Publishing. 1988. p. 136.

[72] Gavin Hambly. *Central Asia*. London; Morrison and Gibb Ltd. 1969. p. 193.

[73] Mirza Bala. "Kırım." *Islam Ansiklopedisi*. vol. 6. Istanbul; Milli Eğitim Basimevi. 1967. p. 758.

nal histories from the Ottoman diaspora lamenting the loss of the *Yeşil Ada* (Green Island) of the Crimea to the Russians. According to Gözaydin, "All of these policies turned the Crimea into an unbearable land of slavery. There was, behind all of these actions a hidden desire to seize the Crimea from the assimilated and subdued Crimean Turks and afterwards to settle it with those of the Orthodox faith."[74]

As noted above, in an interesting convergence of historiographies, Soviet histories of the Crimean Tatars from the 1920s (i.e. from the first decade of Communist rule, when the Soviet regime was still sponsoring the development of Tatar national identity through its policy of *korenizatsiia*) take a similar stance to Gözaydin and are especially critical of the confiscation of 'Crimean toilers' land by the Tatar and Russian 'feudal nobility.' An article which appeared in a 1923 issue of the Soviet journal *National Life (Zhizn' Natsional'nostei)*, for example, claimed "The land of the Tatars was seized by all who desired it—judges, bureaucrats, *mirzas* etc. Huge plots of land were simply taken from the Tatar *auls* and the timid Crimean Tatars, under the pressure of the Russians and then the Germans, became landless and were pushed out of the rich and wide steppes of the Tauride and northern Crimea into the barren and parched Yaila."[75]

All accounts then seem to point to a tremendous loss of land by the Crimea's Muslim population during the 19th century. It is not surprising that this loss of land resources, when combined with the Crimean Tatars' pre-modern sense of religious attachment to land, led to the mass out-migration of the Crimea's indigenous Tatar population in the mid-19th century. While the Crimea's Tatars had never been known for their fanatical version of Islam, many traditionalist Muslims of the peninsula had begun to see their loss of land in apocalyptic terms as demonstrated by their songs from the era. Much of the Crimea's Muslim population had, by the mid-19th century, come to the conclusion that their economic and spiritual salvation lay not in Christian Russia, but in the Muslim Ottoman Empire. In retrospect it should not have come as a surprise to the Crimea's rulers that even the smallest of sparks would set off the flame of mass migration among this unstable and increasingly displaced community.

[74] Gözaydin. op. cit. no. 7. p. 79.

[75] Said Khalimov. "Krymskaia Avtonomnaia Respublika." *Zhizn' Natsional'nostei*. no. 1, 1923. pp. 122-123.

Such a catalyst came in the form of one of the most costly of Europe's 19th century wars, the Crimean War of 1853-6. With the allied French, English, Sardinian and Ottoman invasion of the Crimean Peninsula and the bloody reduction of the Tsar's proud naval bastion at Sevastopol, the Crimean Muslims' position was, in the words of their *destans*, "to go from bad to worse." For many Russian military officers, the distrusted Crimean Muslims were to become synonymous with the hated Ottomans. There was in many circles in St. Petersburg a desire to find a scapegoat for the Empire's humiliating defeat in the Sevastopol campaign and the Crimean Tatars, whose sympathy for Istanbul was well known, soon fulfilled this role. The Crimean Tatars' fate was thus, in many ways, linked to the bodies of thousands of Russian soldiers who lay buried in the rubble of the ruined port of Sevastopol. From this time forward, Russian officials, from the lowest Cossack officer to the Tsar himself, would see in the Crimean Tatars a distrusted race to be expelled from the lands of Holy Russia.

For tens of thousands of Crimean Tatar Muslims, the fall of Sevastopol sounded the death knell for Crimean Islam and the call for *hijra* soon spread throughout the impoverished Tatar villages of the Crimea. The period commemorated in Crimean Tatar national histories as the *ilk sürgün* (first exile) had begun. In one of the least studied migrations in 19th century European history, the majority of the Crimea's Islamic inhabitants would abandon the fields of their ancestors and migrate southward in search of a new homeland on the 'white soil' of the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph.

CHAPTER FIVE

DAR AL-HARB. THE 19TH CENTURY CRIMEAN TATAR MIGRATIONS TO THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

There are considerable differences of opinion between many 19th century Tsarist officials and Soviet propagandists on one side and the Crimean Tatars and their sympathizers (many of whom were Russian) on the other side concerning the Crimean Tatars' role during the Crimean War. General Aleksandr Menshikov (the commander of the Crimean front during the Crimean War) and several Soviet historians have generally depicted the Crimean Tatars as traitors to the Russian *rodina* during this conflict. The Crimean Tatars' communal betrayal of Russia during this war is presented in many post-1944 sources as a rehearsal for this nation's later 'mass betrayal' of the Soviet Union during World War II. Nadinskii, for example, writes "The massive migration of the Tatars to Turkey appeared as a direct response to the war. The main cause of this emigration was the Tatars' fear of just retribution for their traitorous behavior during the war."[1] It was, according to this popular viewpoint, the Crimean Tatars' 'fanatical' attachment to their co-religionists, the Turks, that led this people into collusion with the Ottomans and their allies during the Crimean War. At the conclusion of the war, according to anti-Tatar accounts, the Crimea's Muslim population, in a religious frenzy, abandoned the Russian Empire in a mass migration to join their Muslim allies in the lands of the Sultan-Caliph.

On the other hand, the Crimean Tatars and their sympathizers stress their loyalty during the Crimean War and claim that they were actually the passive victims of Russian pogroms during the conflict. Evgenii Markov claims that the Russian populace of the Crimea (as opposed to the officials in far off St. Petersburg) felt that the Tatars had actually been loyal during the war. According to this source "With one voice they say that, without the Tatars, we would have fallen; all means of transport were exclusively in their hands."[2]

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[1] P.N. Nadinskii. *Ocherkii po Istorii Kryma*. Simferopol; Krymizdat. 1951. p. 140.
[2] Evgenii Markov. *Ocherkii Kryma*. Simferopol; Tavria. 1995. p. 122.

Levitskii claims "All this slander and censure" against the Crimean Tatars was an obvious pretext by those not familiar with the Crimea or its Tatar inhabitants to rid this territory of its Muslim population.[3]

General Totleben claimed that relations between the Russian peasants and Muslim Tatars of the Crimea during the war were friendly and writes "Between the Russians and Tatars there is no noticeable mutual hatred and our simple people are now extraordinarily regretful about the departure of the latter."[4] From London, the exiled Russian writer Alexander Herzen wrote "The general opinion of all those who know the Crimea is unanimously in favor of the Tatars. This people is quiet and submissive and does not have any sort of prejudice against the Russian government, in spite of all the oppression, it has never thought about going over to their co-religionists and for long has not been fanatic."[5]

An examination of the Crimean Tatars' status during the Crimean War and earlier Russo-Turkish Wars favors the latter viewpoint and, in many ways, explains the unprecedented mass migrations of Crimean Tatars to the Ottoman Empire during the mid-19th century. Most contemporary accounts indicate that the Crimean Tatars were victimized during the Crimean War and this experience destabilized this community and left it prone to calls for migration from community religious leaders.

The Status of the Crimean Tatars During the Early Russo-Turkish Wars

It is generally agreed that the roots of the mass 19th century migration of the Crimean Tatars to the Ottoman Empire lay in this minority's treatment during the Crimean War of 1853-1856. While there were, as has been demonstrated, many underlying factors operating in the 19th century Russian province of the Tauride that would have compelled the Crimean Tatar community of this era to

[3] G. I. Levitskii. "Pereselenie Tatar iz Kryma v Turtsiiu." *Vestnik Evropy*. no. 5. 1882. p. 125.

[4] E.I. Totleben. "O Vyselenii Tatar iz Kryma v 1860 godu" *Russkaia Starina*. June 1893. p. 534.

[5] Alexander Herzen. "Gonenie na Krymskikh Tatar." *Kolokol*. Dec. 22, 1861. no. 117. p. 973.

abandon its homeland for the Ottoman Empire, the pressure to emigrate was dramatically increased in time of war. 18th and 19th century Russian authorities were all too aware of the Crimean Muslims' continuing identification with the Ottomans during the Russo-Turkish wars of 1787-1792, 1806-1812, 1828-1829, 1853-1856 and 1877-1878 and considered this Islamic community to be a potential fifth column during time of war.

There were of course grounds for distrusting the Crimean Tatars' historic, cultural, ethnic and religious links to the Ottoman Empire. On many levels the Crimea's Muslim community certainly did consider itself to belong to a religiously-defined 'imagined community' (the *umma*, the ecumenical community of Muslims) that included the Ottoman Muslims.

Russian military strategists in particular feared the presence of this unreliable Muslim community in the Crimean Peninsula which was seen as a vital fortress guarding Russia's southern flank against the Ottomans. In order to prevent any collaboration between the Ottoman fleet and the Crimean Muslims, the Russian government often took the preemptive measure of removing Tatar villagers six or more miles from the southern shore during time of war with the Ottoman Empire. During the 1787-1792 Russo-Ottoman war, for example, Andrei Markevich writes:

> When Sultan Selim (sic) declared war against Russia, it was again necessary to secure the Crimea from the landings of the Turks and to ascertain the mood of the Tatars. The local authorities decided to use the same objectives and measures utilized in the second Turkish War by Catherine and, first of all, to resettle the Tatars from the south shore; and the *mufti* and *mirzas* were in agreement with them. The whole operation was carried out, according to the wishes of the Tatars, without the interference of the police. All the Tatars of the south shore were resettled, except the inhabitants of Tuak, who tearfully swore an oath of allegiance to Russia, and several other villages.[6]

During the 1806-12 Russo-Turkish war, Russian authorities again took preventive measures against the Crimea's Muslim population and expelled them from many villages on the southern shore and confiscated their vessels.[7] Although a Turkish fleet appeared off the

[6] Arsenii Markevich. "Pereseleniia Krymskikh Tatar v Turtsiiu s sviazi s Dvizheniem Naseleniia v Krymu." *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk SSSR*. series 7, no. 4 (1928). p. 390.

[7] David Lynch. *The Conquest, Settlement and Initial Development of New Russia*. New Haven; Yale Univ. Press. 1969. p. 92.

coast of the Crimea during this war, Markevich claims that the Crimean Tatars remained calm at this time.[8]

Regardless, the Tatars' position in Russia had deteriorated during the Russo-Turkish War of 1806-1812 and as many as 3,200 Muslims emigrated from the Crimean Peninsula proper to the Ottoman Empire during this conflict.[9] The most notable movement to the Ottoman Empire on this occasion, however, did not occur among the Tat and Yaliboyu Tatar population of the southern Crimea but among the Nogais of the steppes to the north of the peninsula. With the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest in 1812, the Russian Empire expanded its borders at the Ottoman Empire's expense and annexed the steppe lands of the Buçak or Bessarabia. For hundreds of years this steppe area, in what is now southern Moldavia, had been the homeland of the Buçak Nogai Horde. Prior to 1812, the Buçak had served as a refuge for Nogai nomads seeking to evade Russia's policies of forced settlement and this element could not be reconciled to Russian rule. With Russia's expansion into this last corner of the European steppe, the Buçak and the adjoining Yedisan Horde (which dwelled in the territory to the east of the Buçak) abandoned their homelands and withdrew in a south-westerly direction along the Black Sea towards the nearest territory of the Ottoman sultan. The Yedisan and Buçak Nogais' migration took them south across the Danube River and into the Ottoman-controlled coastal plain of Romania and northern Bulgaria known as the Dobruca, where they were received by the Ottomans as *muhacirs* (religious immigrants).

Approximately 7,000 Nogai are estimated to have vacated the steppe at this time and a considerable area was opened up for Russian, Ukrainian and Moldavian settlement.[10] After the Nogai departure from the Buçak in the end of 1812 there were practically no Tatars left in the region.[11] As to the plains of the Yedisan Horde located to the northwest of the Crimean Peninsula, a 19th century

[8] Markevich. op. cit. no. 6. p. 391. Partly in response to these governmental actions there was a limited uprising in Bahçesaray in 1808, but this was of a local nature and did not spread beyond this immediate vicinity.

[9] V. E. Vozgrin. *Istoricheskie Sud'by Krymskikh Tatar.* Moscow; Misl. 1992. p. 309.

[10] Markevich. op. cit. no. 6. p. 392.

[11] Andrei Popovich. *The Political Status of Bessarabia.* Washington DC; School of Foreign Service. 1931. p. 25.

source claimed Christian and Jewish settlers had taken their place.[12]

The Tsarist empire faced perhaps its gravest threat during Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812 and on this occasion, far from betraying Russia, a Crimean Tatar volunteer cavalry squadron served with distinction in the decisive battle of Borodino. The Tatar light cavalry, led by Ahmet Beg Kungarovich and a Colonel Begildejev, garnered many medals in this crucial battle and proved that there were segments of Crimean Tatar society prepared to give their lives for the Tsar.[13] According to a Russian account "The general quietness of the Tatars and the participation in the war of the Tatar cavalry should have returned the Crimean Tatars to the confidence of the government; a confidence which vacillated with unfavorable rumors, especially concerning the inhabitants of mountainous parts of the Crimea."[14]

This was not, however, to be the case and, in spite of the Crimean Tatars' valor during the French invasion, Tsarist officials continued to distrust the Crimean Muslims.[15] In spite of this fear, Vozgrin claims that the humbled Tatar population remaining in the Crimean Peninsula had been disarmed by Russian officials in 1784 and the passive Crimean Muslim peasantry's military potential was certainly insignificant by the 19th century.[16]

The Tatar population of the Crimea was again the target of preventive administrative displacement from coastal villages during the short Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-29. This suspect community appears, however, to have been passive throughout the course of the war.[17] Despite of their quiescence during this war, Russian officials took the precautionary measure of establishing a defensive cordon of Azov Cossack units in a broad area stretching from the Crimean Peninsula to the Buçak. These units appear to have taken advanta-

[12] Charles Koch. *The Crimea From Kertch to Perekop.* London; Routledge. 1855. p. 128.

[13] P. G. Landau. *Islam v Istorii Rossii.* Moscow; Vostochnaia Literartura.1995. p. 90.

[14] Markevich. op. cit. no. 6. p. 391.

[15] The Tsarist government's fears appear, however, to have been exaggerated and it has been pointed out that the Crimea's military aristocracy had, for the most part, migrated to Ottoman lands in the neighboring territories in the Caucasus (via the Taman Peninsula) to the Buçak or across the Black Sea to Anatolia in 1783. Alan Fisher. "Emigration of Muslims from the Russian Empire in the Years after the Crimean War." *Geschichte Ost Europas.* vol. 35. no.3. 1987. p. 358.

[16] Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 9. p. 297.

[17] Markevich op. cit. no. 6. p. 392.

ge of this opportunity to pillage Tatar villages in the region according to Fisher.[18]

Despite pressure of this nature, there was no large scale migration to the Ottoman Empire during the second Russian-Ottoman conflict of the 19th century. The situation in the Crimea remained outwardly tranquil over the next quarter of a century, but this surface calm hid the growing dissatisfaction that the Crimean Tatars, who continued to suffer from land confiscation, began to feel in the Russian Empire. As storm clouds appeared in the Holy Land as a result of Tsar Nicholas' claims to the Ottoman-controlled holy sites of Palestine, the Tauride province's Tat, Yaliboyu and Nogai Tatar populations would have had little reason to feel secure in their Russian homeland.

The Commencement of the Crimean War

In 1853 the historic rivalry between the Ottoman and Russian Empires again flared up and led to open warfare. In time honored fashion, the Russian army invaded the Ottoman provinces of Rumelia (Turkish, *Rum-eli*, 'the Land of Rome', the truncated European sections of the Ottoman Empire). In the first year of the war the Russian army spread fire and sword through many Muslim villages of the region of the Ottoman provinces that would later form the independent states of Romania and Bulgaria. This destruction soon spread south of the Danube to the coastal plains of Dobruca inhabited by the Crimean Tatars (predominately Nogais) who had fled the inexorable Russian advance into their steppe homelands to the north.

Fearing an increase in Russian power in the strategic Bosphorus straits at the expense of the enfeebled Ottoman Empire, France, Britain and Sardinia joined Sultan Abdul Mecid in his struggle with the Russians. The Allies' combined army quickly went on the offensive and decided upon an attack on one of Russia's most vulnerable spots, the Crimean Peninsula. Thus was born the Crimean War which has been studied endlessly, largely as a result of the unprecedented number of casualties suffered on both sides during the conflict.

While there has been considerable research on the role that disease, poor sanitary conditions and the increasingly effective modern weaponry of the mid-19th century took on the combatant nations, little attention has been devoted to the impact this war had on the indigenous population inhabiting the theater of conflict. That this conflict was to have dire results for the Crimean Tatar peasants who became caught up in this, the first hot conflict of the Russian and British struggle for power in Eurasia known as the 'Great Game', was to be seen almost from the start of the Crimean invasion.

[18] Fisher op. cit. no. 15. p. 357.

The allied operation in the Crimea began with an amphibious landing in the broad Kalamita Bay off the shore of Evpatoriia (still known to the Crimean Muslims by its old Tatar name, Gozleve) on the western coast of the Crimean Peninsula. Here the British and French soldiers came into contact for the first time with the remnant of the once numerous Tatar inhabitants of the northern coasts of the Black Sea. The following narrative of the initial meeting between the English and the indigenous Muslim population is typical of the wary, but often cordial, greeting the Allies appear to have found among the Crimean Tatars whose villages presented a backdrop for some of the worst fighting in 19th century Europe.

> When the people of the neighboring district came to see the strength of the armies descending upon their coast, the head men of the villages began to present themselves at the quarters of the Allies. The first of these deputations was received by Lord Raglan in the open air... They wore the pelisse or long robe, and, although their headgear was black lamb-skin, it was much of the same shape as the Turkish fez. They spoke with truthfulness and dignity, allowing it to appear that the invasion was not distasteful to them, but abstaining from all affection of enthusiastic sympathy. They seemed to understand war and its exigencies; for they asked the interpreters to say that such of their possessions as might be wanted by the English army were at Lord Raglan's disposal.[19]

As the Allies commenced their partial occupation of the south-western Crimea and the long siege of the naval bastion of Sevastopol, there were many such contacts between the invaders and the Tatars who were densely settled in this region. For the most part, however, the wary Crimean Muslim peasants, having had considerable experience with armies in the past, greeted the invaders with reserved caution.

In the Evpatoriia and Yalta vicinity, however, there were instan-

[19] Alexander Kinglake. *The Invasion of the Crimea. Its Origin and an Account of its Progress*. New York; Harper and Brothers. 1874. vol. I. pp. 422-423.

ces of Crimean Tatar peasants taking advantage of the invasion to burn the estates of some of the most oppressive *pomeshchiks*.[20] In the Allied amphibious invasion of the port of Kerch on the far eastern coast of the Crimea, local Tatars from the countryside (and Russians) also partook in the general plundering of this town which resulted from a breakdown of discipline among the Allied landing force. One can also speculate that the Crimean Tatars of the Baidar Valley fraternized with the Ottoman portion of the Allied army stationed in this Tatar-inhabited valley during the siege of nearby Sevastopol. These examples of disloyalty led many in St. Petersburg to look upon the *entire* Crimean Muslim population as real or potential traitors to the Russian Empire during the height of war.

This attitude was not new in Russian administrative circles. It is interesting to note that, in the days just before the invasion, Prince Aleksandr Menshikov, the Russian general in charge of the Crimean front, had actually proposed the expulsion of the entire Crimean Tatar population to the mainland as a precautionary measure. A second Tsarist official, a Minister Köppen, went even further and called for the forced transfer of the Crimea's entire Tatar population to Semipalatinsk (Eastern Siberia).[21] As such attitudes spread in the highest echelons of the Russian government, the idea that the Crimean Tatars were a dispensable population whose expulsion was seen as a natural proposition became widespread in the Russian administration. The speed of the Allied invasion and the logistical efforts that would have been diverted from war preparations for an operation of this scale, however, prevented further discussion on the implementation of this drastic solution to the Crimean Tatar 'problem'.[22]

Cossack Wartime Depredations in the Evpatoriia District

While this immediate threat to the Crimean Tatars had been removed, they faced a new danger in the form of Cossack *sotinas* (squadrons) sent to patrol the peninsula's Muslim villages during the siege of Sevastopol. It should be mentioned that the Cossacks, who earned a reputation for their pogroms against Russian Jews of the Pale in the 19th century, also had a deep-seated antipathy towards their historic enemies, the Muslims. For centuries the Cossacks had loyally guarded the Tsar's frontiers against the inroads of Muslim peoples, such as the Turks, Bashkirs, Tatars, Chechens, Kazakhs and Circassians, and warfare against Muslims was ingrained in this frontier people's culture. It is not surprising that the Cossack units assigned to guard the approaches to the allied-occupied Evpatoriia district took advantage of this opportunity to plunder their traditional enemy, the Muslims.

[20] Markevich. op. cit. no 6. p. 393.
[21] Ibid. p. 394.
[22] B.M. Vol'fson. "Emigratsiia Krymskikh Tatar v 1860 g." *Istoricheskie Zapiski*. no. 9. 1940. p. 187.

General Totleben, the Russian general whose name became widely known throughout the Empire and the West for his heroic leadership in the defense of Sevastopol, seems to have looked upon the attacks of the Cossack military units (headed by an official identified only as Maksimov) on the Crimea's civilian Tatar population with some distaste. In his article on the Crimean Tatar emigration, this uniquely qualified, eyewitness source wrote:

> Maksimov, with the Cossacks began to punish and rob the villages of the Tatars and forcefully outraged women, in the village of Tshei they flogged to death 7 men and announced that with the arrival of the Russian army, all Tatars would be killed. At that time the proclamation of Marshall St. Arno (St. Arnaud, the French commander) promising complete protection was read and 20,000 Tatars of the Evpatoriia district went over to the allies.[23]

Other contemporary Russian sources support Totleben's account of events in the Evpatoriia district during the Crimean invasion. In his account, G. P. Levitskii claimed:

> During the course of the recent war, Cossack patrols moving through the district arbitrarily seized unfortunate Tatars under the pretext that they intended to go over to the enemy and forced them to pay ransom and, if they refused, they were handed over to the command as deserters and traitors...Therefore at the present there are many Tatars in the provinces of Orlovsk, Kursk, Poltava, Ekaterina and Kherson (mainland Ukraine) who are entirely innocent.[24]

During their attacks on the Tatar villages of the Evpatoriia district, the Don and Ural Cossacks also drove off the local Nogais' cattle and raided their *yamas* (underground grain storage bins).[25] In addi-

[23] E.I. Totleben. op. cit. no. 4. p. 332.
[24] Levitskii. op. cit. no. 3. p. 605.
[25] Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 9. 325.

tion, Cossack patrols arrested and deported any Tatars who left their village to collect water.[26] In his 19th century account, Evgenii Markov claims "If a group of 20 Tatars gathered they were fired upon. This was also a betrayal. The Cossacks so loved this idea that they looked upon the entire Crimea as upon traitors. Under this mandate, they drove away herds of sheep, burnt down whole villages and even the farms of *pomeshchiks*."[27]

In their defense, some of the Cossacks' tactics in the Evpatoriia district can be attributed to their traditional scorched earth tactics designed to prevent stores from falling into the hands of invaders. Many of the villages in this region may have been destroyed simply to prevent the Allies from obtaining supplies from the local villagers. On more than one occasion Allied patrols arrived at a village to find that it was in the process of being burnt by Cossack units that shadowed their movements. A British source mentions this phenomenon in his work and writes of his squadron's passage through the Crimean countryside "The sky was illuminated as usual with the light of burning villages, which the Cossacks had fired up the country."[28]

As a result of these depredations, thousands of Tatars from the predominately Nogai-inhabited Evpatoriia district fled to the Allied occupied city of Evpatoriia seeking sanctuary. A contemporary Russian source describes this panicked flight to Evpatoriia to escape the Cossack marauders and claims "Fearing most of all the pursuit of the Cossacks, whole Tatar villages moved to Evpatoriia and its environs and died there in droves from starvation and lack of housing."[29]

As many as 20,000 Crimean Tatar refugees sought asylum with the departing allies and were evacuated on allied ships at the end of the Crimean campaign. Mark Pinson claims that an additional 10,000 to 20,000 Tatars may have emigrated to the Ottoman Empire during the war, making this the largest departure of Crimean Tatars from the Tauride since the mass migration of 1792.[30] Markevich points out that the majority of Crimean Tatars who left the Crimea

[26] Levitskii. op. cit. no. 3. p. 605.
[27] Evgenii Markov. op. cit. no. 2. p. 115.
[28] Nicholas Woods. *The Past Campaign. A Sketch of the War in the East.* London; Longman, Brown and Green. 1855. p. 314.
[29] Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 9. 325.
[30] Mark Pinson. "Russian Policy and the Emigration of the Crimean Tatars to the Ottoman Empire 1854-1862." *Güney-Dogu Avrupa Araştmaları Dergisi.* no. 1. 1972. p. 44.

during the war came from Evpatoriia, the Baidar Valley (headquarters for the Ottoman army headed by Omar Pasha during the war) and Balaklava (a harbor on the south-western tip of the Crimea which saw some of the fiercest fighting of the campaign).[31] At war's end this abandonment of Russia by the Crimean Tatars was seen as a clear manifestation of betrayal by the military authorities in Sevastopol.

The Question of the Crimean Tatars' Wartime Betrayal

In the aftermath of the war in the devastated military port of Sevastopol itself there was a growing distrust of the Muslim peasants of the surrounding countryside and in many ways the local Tatars reciprocated this feeling. Sevastopol had, from the beginning of Russian rule in the Crimea, been an alien Russian enclave in the Muslim Crimea and was perhaps that part of the Crimea that was most thoroughly Russian in an ethnic, political, cultural and administrative sense. In many ways the Sevastopol of the mid-19th century resembled the Sevastopol of the post-Soviet era.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the declaration of an independent Ukraine (which has inherited control of the Crimea), Sevastopol has again become a purely Russian foothold and a bastion of Russian nationalism and Soviet-era conservatism in a foreign land. Declared off-limits during the Soviet period, this strategic base was finally opened to outsiders in 1996 and the author visited this historic site which has much of the patriotic symbolism for the Russians that the Alamo or Pearl Harbor has for Americans.

Today in Russian-dominated Sevastopol there are many memorials to both the heroic defense of Sevastopol during Crimean War and to the bloody Nazi siege of the fortified harbor in World War II. While statues of Lenin have been toppled throughout the former USSR and many outward symbols of Communism destroyed in the former Soviet lands, these symbols are still prominent in Sevastopol and visitors to this military base today may feel as if they are entering a Soviet-era time warp. The largest statue of Lenin this author has witnessed in the former Soviet Union still dominates the port; all signs are in Russian (even though the port of Sevastopol is nominally a

[31] Markevich. op. cit. no. 6. p. 395.

part of the Ukraine); red Soviet or the tri-color Russian flags fly on most buildings and on the frigates in the harbor; and nostalgia for the old days of order personified by Lenin and Stalin is commonplace here.[32] The author arrived in Sevastopol in November 1997 in time to witness a Soviet-era parade on Sevastopol's main street celebrating the founding of the Soviet Union. Russian naval cadets dressed in uniforms still bearing the hammer and sickle led the parade and marchers in the column appeared to be of all ages, although the elderly predominated.

As my Crimean Tatar hosts witnessed this celebration of the state which had done so much to destroy their nation they became visibly agitated when marchers began singing the Soviet national anthem and passed with banners emblazoned with the face of Josef Stalin, the leader who had personally given the order for their people's deportation during World War II. While the returning Crimean Tatars have imagined a homeland described to them in the stories of their parents and grandparents, Sevastopol, the 'Pride of Russia' is certainly not what these returnees envisioned. Newspapers printed by the city's conservative military press, such as the *Flag of the Homeland (Flag Rodiny)*, are replete with anti-Tatar agitation and few Tatars have actually settled in this military zone.

Much of the predominantly Russian population of Sevastopol still remembers the Crimean Tatars as traitors to Russia and the Soviet Union (which are synonymous in many Crimean Russians' minds now) and they are largely unwelcome and distrusted here. Although the Crimean Tatars still stubbornly call Sevastopol (a city of almost a quarter of a million people) by the name of an insignificant Tatar hamlet that existed here over two hundred years ago, Ak Yar (White Precipice), this enclave is, for all intents and purposes, a part of the Russian *rodina* not the Crimean Tatar *vatan* (Tatar 'homeland'). Despite the fact that it is, along with Simferopol, the largest urban area in the Crimea few Crimean Tatars have felt the lure of this Russian city.

As members of a suspect 'nation of traitors', my Crimean Tatar hosts were visibly relieved to depart from Russian Sevastopol, a feeling

[32] There has been much contention between Russia and the Ukraine over possession of Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet. In describing this tension, few in the West mention that the fleet is rusting, out-dated and in a poor state of storage. In addition, the dilapidated Black Sea Fleet lacks tactical air cover since the SU-17M fighter bombers that guard it are also in a state of poor maintenance.

that may have been shared by 19th century Crimean Tatars after the Crimea War. In addition to the usual land confiscation, after the war the Crimean Muslims (especially those living in the Sevastopol district) began to experience outward manifestations of discrimination and distrust from the Russian authorities. In addition to living under blanket accusations of treason, many Tatar villages had suffered from Cossack plundering, military requisitioning and displacement, and had subsequently failed to receive financial assistance or recompense for their wartime losses from distrustful government officials.

At the conclusion of the war it became apparent that the Nogai Tatars of the Evpatoriia district had suffered the most during the campaign but all Crimean Tatar sub-ethnies were adversely affected by the events surrounding the war. Although there were no accusations of collaboration leveled against the Tatars of the coast, Fisher, for example, claims:

> When many Crimean Tatar peasants were removed from the coast during the Crimean War, *pomeshchiks* took advantage of the opportunity afforded. They expended great effort to prevent the Tatars' return. Imposing higher taxes and duties on the returning Tatars, seizing water supplies, they forced peasants to remain inland or, as a last resort, to emigrate to the Ottoman empire.[33]

Powerful landowners throughout the Crimea were quick to turn the accusations of treason against the Crimean Tatars to their profit and used this blanket accusation to force Muslim peasants off their ancestral lands. The issue of the Crimean Tatars' betrayal of Russia during the Crimean War also has tremendous resonance for this people's descendants who have returned to a largely Russian Crimea in the post-Soviet context. These Crimean Tatar settlers still live with the stigma of having betrayed Russia and the Soviet Union during two of their most crucial military engagements. An analysis of this issue reveals that the depth of the Crimean Tatars' collusion with the Allies during the Crimean War has, like their accusations of betrayal during World War II, been greatly exaggerated by their detractors.

After considerable research on the issue, the author came to the

[33] Alan Fisher. "Social and Legal Aspects of Russian-Muslim Relations in the Nineteenth Century. The Case of the Crimean Tatars." *Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds. The European Pattern.* ed. Abram Ascher et. al. New York; 1979. p. 82.

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conclusion that there is no reference to the Crimean Tatars as allies or an indigenous source of military or logistical assistance for the Allied invaders during the campaign of 1854-56 in English or French accounts of the Crimean War. Even if this had been the case, this largely passive, unarmed peasant population could certainly not have affected the outcome of such decisive military encounters as the battles of the Alma and Balaklava or the siege of Sevastopol. The majority of rumors of the Tatars' betrayal seem to have in fact been spread *after* the war by land speculators seeking to take advantage of the distrust in military circles to expel the Muslim peasantry from their prized lands.

According to contemporary sources, after the war, Russian and Greek land speculators began circulating rumors among the frightened Crimean Muslim peasantry claiming that the Russian government intended to expel the Crimea's Tatar population to the Orenburg district of Siberia for wartime treachery.[34] Their intent was to frighten the passive Tatar peasantry into emigrating and freeing up their lands for purchase at base prices. Such rumors certainly destabilized this war-stricken community in the years after the Crimean War and also lead to a retroactive debate in Russian circles concerning the level of the Crimean Tatars' traitorous activities during the war.

Discussion of the Crimean Tatars' wartime treachery continued into the Soviet period and, in his work, Nadinskii writes:

> After the landing of enemy troops in Evpatoriia, the Crimean Tatars in large numbers went over to the enemy. From among the Tatar volunteers in Evpatoriia under the command of the Anglo-French and Turkish officers, special brigades of *'askers'* (Arabic, literally 'soldiers') were formed. The total number of Tatar special brigades that were formed was 10,000.[35]

Vozgrin treats Nadinskii's 1950s anti-Tatar account of the Crimean Tatars' betrayal with scorn in his recent work and points out that the myth of the Tatar army was based on the short-lived existence of a largely ineffectual 800 man Tatar village militia organized to defend Muslim villages from Allied marauders.[36] It does seem highly improbable that the Crimean Tatar refugee population of Evpatoriia which, at most, numbered 20,000 (including women, children and the elderly), could field an army of 10,000 soldiers. More importantly, Western sources would have certainly mentioned the existence of an anti-Russian Tatar military formation of this size operating in the Crimean theater. On the contrary, K. Kongashivili points out that two Tatar divisions actually partook in the defense of Sevastopol in 1854-1855 and this contribution has gone completely unnoticed in most Russian sources.[37]

The Tatar collusion with the Allied invaders in Evpatoriia appears to have actually been of a rather limited nature. During the Crimean campaign Pinson claims that some of the Tatar refugees in Evpatoriia assisted the Allies in constructing defenses for the city during the English and French occupation of the port.[38] Few could deny that this refugee element had come to tie its fate to that of the Allies not the Tsarist government which was represented in the Crimea by plundering Cossack squadrons. Having provided perhaps the most in-depth analysis of the reported incidents of Crimean Tatar betrayal during the war Levitskii concluded in his 19th century account "All these accusations were insufficient to censure an entire people."[39]

In the aftermath of the Crimean War there was nevertheless a feeling among government circles that the Crimean Tatars had somehow played a role in the Russian defeat in the conflict. It is interesting to note, however, that Russian peasants actually living in the Crimea after the war were of a different mind. A 19th century visitor to the Crimea provides the following anecdote which relates his discussion with Russians in the Crimea after the war:

> Here I did not meet one long-time inhabitant who did not scorn with all his heart the mean censure of the Tatars which resulted in such a disaster for the entire region...Again one may ask 'Is this really a voluntary betrayal of the government?' Even in the very places of the landing, the Tatars remained quiet and faithful. One *pomeshchik* known to me, on the day of the landing, arrived at his estate located not far from Burliuka and ordered the hay and grain to be burned upon the first approach of the enemy. The Tatars placed their hands on their hearts and promised to execute the order. The enemy arrived and the hay was burnt. There are your traitors! However, even if the Tatars finally really did engage in betrayal, they should be absolved. One would

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[34] Herzen. op. cit. no. 5. p. 973.
[35] Nadinskii. op. cit. no. 1. p. 140.
[36] Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 9. p. 328.
[37] K. Kongashivili. *Kratkii Slovar' Istorii Kryma.* Simferopol; Biznes-Inform. 1995. p. 151.
[38] Pinson. op. cit. no. 30. p. 44
[39] Levitskii. op. cit. no. 3. p. 604.

> need to be a true follower of Allah and a fatalist to quietly endure that which was done to this poor people during the campaign.[40]

For the most part, the unarmed Crimean Tatar peasants appear to have been little more than spectators to the massive battles between modern armies that surged over the south-western sections of their homeland and the vast majority followed the Crimean *müfti's* edict ordering them to "be faithful to the Tsar and homeland."[41] Regardless of the facts, rumors of the Crimean Tatars' 'mass betrayal' reached the ears of the Tsar himself. As news reached St. Petersburg that some fearful Crimean Tatar peasants had begun to emigrate in the years after the war, Tsar Alexander II sent word to the Crimea stating "It is not appropriate to oppose the overt or covert exodus of the Tatars. On the contrary, this voluntary emigration should be considered as a beneficial action calculated to free the territory from this unwanted population."[42] When news of the White Tsar's declaration reached the Tatar villages of the Crimea, Totleben claims "The Tatars accepted this as a forced measure of eviction, concluding that they had forever lost the favor of the Tsar."[43]

The Russian Conquest of Circassia and the Start of the Muslim Migrations of 1860

As word of the Tsar's attitude towards them spread among the Tatar villages of the Crimea's steppe, mountains and southern coast, news also began to reach the Crimea of events unfolding in the nearby north Caucasian flank in the summer of 1859. After decades of determined struggle, the redoubtable Sheikh Shamil's force of Avar, Chechen, and Kumyk mountain *gazis* (anti-Russian guerrillas) had at last succumbed to the might of Imperial Russia. The victorious Russians subsequently began mopping up operations in the lands of the last independent Caucasian people living to the west of Shamil's Imamate, the Circassians. One after another the terraced mountain villages of the Circassians (which closely resembled those of the Tat and Yaliboyu Tatars in the southern Crimea) fell to the Russians who used scorched earth tactics to crush the fiercely independent

[40] Markov. op. cit. no. 2. pp. 112 and 114.
[41] Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 9. p. 323.
[42] Markevich. op. cit. no. 6. p. 395.
[43] Totleben. op. cit. no. 4. p. 538.

Muslim highlanders. The following account of the conquest of Circassia provided by a Russian who served in the conquering army demonstrates the viciousness of the campaign in which no quarter was asked or given:

> The mountain *auls* were burned by the hundred. The snow had only just melted away, but it was before the trees had become clothed in their greenery (in February and March); the crops were eaten by the horses or even trampled down. If we managed to catch the inhabitants of the *auls* unawares they were immediately led away under military escort to the shores of the Black Sea and then sent to Turkey. How many times did it happen that in the huts which had been hurriedly abandoned upon our approach we found warm gruel with a spoon in it on the table, clothing which was being repaired and with the needle still in it, and various children's toys which looked as though they had been spread out on the floor next to a child. Sometimes—to the credit of our soldiers—very seldom, bestial atrocities were committed.[44]

In the process of conquering the Circassian lands, the Russian army engaged in demographic warfare that would today be considered mass ethnic cleansing. Close to a million Circassians (the largest ethnic group on the north Caucasus flank) were forced from their Caucasian homelands between 1859 and 1864 and the mortality rate among these emigrants reached unprecedented heights. It has been estimated that hundreds of thousands of this number may have died due to disease, starvation or drowning during the migration and resettlement.[45]

While this mass departure from the Caucasus by the Muslim highlanders can safely be described as a forced migration, there was also an underlying religious pull in the Circassian Muslims' desire to emigrate to the 'white soil' of the Ottoman Empire. One Westerner observed of the Circassians "To all advice that they should remain in the Kuban, they answered 'We want to live and die among our fellow Moslems. Our desire is to rest our bones in holy soil'."[46]

[44] Barsabi Baytugan. "The North Caucasus". *Studies on the Soviet Union.* (New Series). vol. XI. no. 1, 1971.p. 10. See also N. Drozdov "Posledniaia Bor'ba s Gortsami na Zapadnom Kavkaze." *Kavkazskii Sbornik.* no. 2. 1877. pp. 387-457.
[45] Kemal Karpat. "Ottoman Immigration Policies and Settlement in Palestine." *Settler Regimes in Africa and the Arab World.* ed. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod and Baha Abu-Laban. Wilmette Illinois. Medina Univ. Press Intl. 1974. pp. 7-72.
[46] There was among the emigrating Circassians no identification with their lands in modern nationalist terms and most saw the Ottoman Empire as a haven. Seteney Shami. *Ethnicity and Leadership: The Circassians in Jordan.* University of California Doctoral Dissertation. 1989. p. 41. G.A. Dzidzariia. *Makhadzirstwo i Problemy Istorii Abkhazii XIX Stoletiia.* Sukhumi; 1982.

The Russians applied the term *makhadzhirstvo* (from the Arabic word *muhacir*, religious immigrant) to the voluntary abandonment of Russia to escape infidel rule.

To the Crimean Muslims who felt increasingly insecure in their own homeland after hearing the Tsar's pronouncement, the fall of the Muslim North Caucasus and brutal expulsion of the legendary Circassian highlanders signaled the end of Islam on the northern Black Sea littoral. Rumors began to spread through the Crimean Tatar villages at this time that the Russian government intended to forcefully convert the Crimea's Muslim population or expel them to Siberia.[47] A wave of panic also spread among other Muslim peoples and many indigenous Caucasian groups began to migrate to the Ottoman Empire in a vast migration transfer that presaged the expulsion of Muslims from the Balkans in 1876-78. In addition to the Circassians, as many as 40,000 Chechens and tens of thousands of Ubykhs left for the Ottoman empire in 1860. The Muslim portion of the Abkhazian population that lived in coastal Georgia (approximately 110,000) also left their homeland at this time leaving a small, largely Orthodox Abkhazian population which would plague the Georgian government in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse (and would come to be erroneously portrayed as Muslims in the West).[48] The Laz and Ajars of the south-western Caucasus also began to migrate to the lands of the Sultan as the Russians rounded out their conquests on the western coast of the Caucasus.[49]

The Steppe Nogais and Russian Rule up to 1860

The migration movement soon spread from the Circassians to the Nogais of the Kuban plains of the northern Caucasus and this people appears to have been quite susceptible to calls for the abandonment of the Russian Empire. The Kuban Nogais had suffered from Russian and Cossack encroachments on their grazing grounds since the 1774 conquest of the Crimean Khanate and many of this people had, by the mid-19th century, grown dissatisfied with Russian rule. From the beginning of the Tsarist conquest of the Kuban, Russian administrators had distrusted the presence of this nomadic horde on their unstable borders with the Ottoman-dominated Circassian coast.

[47] Levitskii. op. cit. no. 3. p. 626.

[48] T. Abkazian. "Literature on Abkhazia and the Abkhazian-Abazian." *Caucasian Review*. 16:3. (1968). pp. 217-222.

[49] The Laz territories around Batumi were granted to Russia following the Treaty of Berlin, 1878.

The Russian military had come to the conclusion that this people's removal was essential for the stabilization of this turbulent frontier zone. When, in 1783, the Nogai *biys* (Nogai, *'bey'* tribal leaders) discovered that the Russian government intended to transfer the Kuban Horde from its traditional pastures to lands south of the Urals recently vacated by the Kalmyk Mongols (most of whom migrated to Manchu China in 1771 to escape Russian rule), they rose in revolt against their new masters. The Russian southern army under General Suvorov had, however, anticipated the Nogais' actions. John Baddley describes the results of the Kuban Nogais' doomed uprising in his classic history of the Russian conquest of the Caucasus:

> When the infuriated Nogais proceeded to attack the nearest Russian detachments, regiment after regiment closed in upon them, and in a short time all was over. Driven into boggy ground, and seeing no possibility of escape, the miserable nomads in mad excess of despair destroyed their valuables, slaughtered their women, and threw their little children into the neighboring stream.[50]

In the ensuing slaughter Ia. Smirnova claims as many as 7,000 Nogais were killed and thousands of Nogais fled to neighboring Circassia.[51] By 1791 many of those Nogais that fled to Circassia at this time, however, returned to Russia and were settled by the Russian government to the north-east of the Crimean Peninsula between the Sea of Azov and the Molochnaia River.[52] Subsequently a remnant of several thousand Nogai families were permitted to remain in the Kuban steppe in the Eisk vicinity while the remnants of the Yediçkul, Djambulaq and Yedisan Hordes were also settled in the steppe districts of the Tauride Province.[53] In addition, a large number of Nogai Tatars were settled in the Stavropol region adjacent to the Kuban.

Russian governmental policies towards the Nogais of the Kuban and those who inhabited the steppes to the north of the Crimea in

[50] John Baddley. *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*. London; Longmans, Green and Co. 1908. p. 44.

[51] Ia. S. Smirnova et. al. *Nogaitsy, Istoriko-Etnograficheskii Ocherk*. Cherkesk; Stavropol'skoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo. 1988. p. 37.

[52] Ebenezer Henderson. *Biblical Researches and Travels in Russia including a Tour of the Crimea*. London; James Nisbet. 1826. p. 379.

[53] Smirnova. op. cit. no. 51. p. 37.

the Tauride province soon focused on settlement of these traditionally unsettled nomads.[54] In the early 19th century, the Nogais of the Tauride Province were governed by a Count Maison who patiently endeavored to settle these wandering nomads. Maison drew circles around the Nogais' encampments and forbade them to transfer their *yurts* beyond these demarcated areas. After this step had been completed, a contemporary source writes "There now remained but one step to finish the work which had been so far unsuccessful. In 1812, Count Maison, who, though a solitary Frenchman, in the midst of ill-satisfied hordes of the wildest people in Europe, seems, by his address, to have secured that every tent which remained should be publicly paid for and destroyed."[55]

These policies were certainly unpopular among the Nogai herders who resented the intrusion of any authority. The increasing encroachment by the Russian bureaucracy into the Nogais' traditionally unrestricted way of life had many parallels with the Tsarist government's infringement on the neighboring Mongol Kalmyk nomads' traditional patterns. The Buddhist Kalmyks (the true Mongols of the steppe, who lived to the north-east of the Kuban for two centuries) chafed under the government's increasing interference in their lands and, in 1771, the vast majority of the Mongol Kalmyk nomads emigrated across the Kazakh plains to Manchu China to escape Russian rule.

In addition, it should be noted that the Tauride Nogais' cause for grievance grew during the Crimean War as the Russian government made considerable logistic demands on the Nogais living in the steppes to the north of the Crimea and in the plains of the peninsula itself. Hundreds of carts, horses, sheep and cattle were requisitioned from the Nogai villagers by the government during the conflict. In addition, Nogai cartsmen and riders were conscripted to transport the wounded to the mainland, carry artillery shells to the front and feed Russian soldiers billeted in their lands.[56] The Nogai Tatars, unlike the local Russian population, however, received very

[54] According to Smirnova "From the first day of their transfer to the Crimea all the political powers dealing with them were directed towards their settlement." Ibid.

[55] Robert Walpole. *Travels in Various Countries of the East.* London; Longman, Hurst et. al. 1820. p. 466.

[56] Smirnova. op. cit. no. 51. p. 39.

little compensation from the government for their labor and losses and this appears to have seriously disrupted their economy.[57]

The Nogai Steppe Migration of 1860

In the years following the Russian defeat of Shamil, Russian sources record the arrival among the Nogais of itinerant holy men (presumably *sufi* dervishes) from the Caucasus who circulated throughout the Nogai *auls* calling on the faithful to abandon the *Dar al-Harb* for the lands of the Caliph.[58] As early as April 1859, Russian settlers in the Kuban began to notice considerable activity among their Nogai neighbors that also suggest internal religious calls for emigration. A contemporary source describes the departure of the Nogais as follows:

> Distributed with their families and neighbors among the Russians, with whom the Nogais lived well, events took on a dramatic character. In the Nogai settlements could be heard the crying of women and children. In the cemeteries there was a tremendous scene of farewells at family graves. When the Russian peasants tried to persuade them to stay, the Nogais with tears answered 'No we cannot—everyone is going, it is a sin to stay.'[59]

By the summer of 1859 whole villages of Nogais from the Djambulaq and Kuban Hordes were in motion. Eyewitness accounts of this strange migration claim:

> The Nogais unwillingly quit their homeland...In departing we did not, however, see one tear in the eyes of the 90-year-old elders; but many among the Nogais gave sincere farewells to their Russian acquaintances who had resided in the vicinity of their *auls* as they departed. The women and children, dressed in their best dresses, sat or herded the cattle. The men on horseback were wealthy but those on foot poor.[60]

Many of the departing Nogais moved westward across the southern Ukraine and wintered in the steppes to the north of the Crimean Peninsula before embarking from the Crimean ports of Feodosiia or Kerch for the Ottoman Empire. Others migrated to the Ottoman province of Dobruca via the Buçak steppe which was, by this time, filled with Slavic, Jewish and Moldavian settlers. This trek to the

[57] Levitskii. op. cit. no. 3. p. 606.
[58] Smirnova. op. cit. no. 51. p. 39.
[59] Ibid. p. 39.
[60] Ibid. p. 45.

Ottoman Empire was to be Europe's last great migration of the descendants of the Tatar hordes and was to see the virtual disappearance from the steppes of the Kipchak-speaking Turkic nomads that had dominated these plains for close to a millennium. Between 1859 and 1860 as many as 50,000 Nogai herdsmen (approximately two thirds of the Kuban's Nogai population) were to abandon the Kuban and the neighboring district of Stavropol.[61]

The passage of this large contingent of Nogais across the lands of the Tauride Province could not but have affected the Nogais of the Crimea and neighboring steppes who were still suffering from impoverishment caused by the Crimean War and from the devastation wrecked on their communities by Cossack marauders. Most noticeably, a group of 16,000 migrating Nogais wintered with their kin in the Melitopol and Berdiansk districts (to the north of the Crimea) in the winter of 1859-60. Their prolonged stay in this region appears to have unsettled the Nogais of the Crimean Peninsula and steppes regions to the north who probably became alarmed at the Kuban Nogais' stories of the Russian treatment of the Circassians.[62] At this time, devastated Circassian refugees from the Caucasus were also being channeled through the ports of Kerch and Feodosiia on their way to the Ottoman Empire. The mass abandonment of the Russian Empire by this shattered Muslim people who had been so closely linked to the Crimea for centuries also appears to have furthered the spread of panic among the Crimea's Muslim inhabitants.

The 'Great Migration' of 1860 from the Tauride Province

By the spring of 1860 panic had begun to spread among the Muslim population of the Tauride Province. Unsettling rumors spread among the Tatar villages claiming that the Tsar would soon be giving the Crimean Tatars the same choice he had given the defeated Circassians: removal to the interior provinces of the Empire or deportation to the Ottoman Empire.[63] 150,000 Circassians had been expelled to the Russian interior from their coastal-mountain homeland and many feared this fate would soon befall the Crimean

[61] Prior to this departure (in 1850), the Nogai population of this region was estimated to have been 76,148. Ibid.
[62] Markevich. op. cit. no. 6. p. 397.
[63] Ibid. p. 395.

Muslims.[64] In early 1860 the *Büyük Göç* (Great Migration) spread from the Caucasus to the Crimea and the peninsula's Muslim population began selling its possessions to earn enough capital to survive the journey to the Islamic Ottoman Empire. There appears to have been a mixture of sorrow and joy in the Crimea as the oppressed, and increasingly landless, population of Crimean Tatars began preparations to leave for the blessed soil of the Caliph.

As the Tauride Tatars began their preparations for departure, bewildered Russian officials were quick to describe this emigration as an obvious manifestation of religious fanaticism. An official in 1860, for example, wrote "The administration of the time was convinced that the emigration of the Tatars was evoked by the Mohammedan clergy which, in every way, agitated for emigration and assured the ignorant masses that the *mirzas* had sold them to the Russian government which intended to forcefully convert them to Orthodoxy."[65]

To an extent this view point was correct. As it had been with the Caucasian peoples, there certainly were undertones of religious migration or *hijra* in this emigration movement that appeared in 1860 among the Tauride Muslims. One must not, however, overlook the Crimean Tatars' oppressed situation in the Empire which stemmed from their loss of land to *pomeshchiks* or their suffering during the Crimean War. These events certainly contributed to calls among the Crimean Tatars for abandoning their ancient Crimean hearth for the Ottoman Empire.

The migration movement in the Crimea appears to have begun in the Ak Kogekskii, Apskii and Aikish counties of the Feodosiia (Kaffa) district and soon spread into the steppes towards Evpatoriia, Simferopol and Perekop.[66] According to Shcherban':

> The emigration began in spring of this year. The Tatars as early as winter had decided to abandon the Crimea and they moved to sow and apply for jobs by no later than April 15. From this date the movement became clearly noticeable. At first a solitary wanderer, then a family, and finally a commune aimed for Turkey, selling their belongings, throwing that which could not find a buyer onto the steppe or into a marsh. The emigration grew not by the day, but by the hour.[67]

[64] Seteney Shami. op. cit. no. 46. p. 40.
[65] M. Goldenberg. "Krym i Krymskie Tatary." *Vestnik Evropy*. no. 6. 1883. p. 69.
[66] Levitskii op. cit. no. 3. p. 625.
[67] N. Shcherban'. "Pereselenie Krymskikh Tatar." *Russkii Vestnik*. 1860. vol. 30. 11-12. p. 38 and 41.

By the summer of 1860, "the movement flared up like a steppe fire, moving from district to district, it became out of control like an avalanche."[68] A Crimean landowner of this era describes the departure of the Crimean peasants of his estate as follows:

> I am not able to recall this event, which reminded me of the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, without sorrow...having fixed a day for departure, a chosen person left for the nearest port city, where a steamboat or sailing vessel had been selected in advance. Finally, they all departed and immediately there was silence in the village where the day before hundreds of voices had been heard. Sending off the inhabitants on our land, from the village of Kopurchi, to Evpatoriia, I was a witness to the following scene; as the carts left the village and passed the cemetery, everyone took a handful of soil from the graves of their relatives which was carefully placed in a towel.[69]

Several accounts mention the departing Crimean Tatars' ritual of taking soil from the fields of their home village which had been cultivated by their forebears for centuries or from the graves of revered forebears. General Totleben, for example, describes the departure of Crimean Tatar peasants for the local administrative center to obtain emigration passports as follows "The Tatars continued to emigrate in crowds, with tears they said farewell to their homeland, taking earth with them from the graves of their fathers, quietly and without murmur they passed through the region and sat before the judge, submitting themselves to all laws and unfamiliar demands of the authorities with remarkable meekness and submission."[70]

As the summer of 1860 waned, the pace of out-migration from the Tauride Province accelerated and whole districts began to empty, especially in the Nogai-inhabited steppe districts of Evpatoriia, Perekop and areas to the north of Simferopol. From throughout the steppes the Nogais began to gather around Sarabuz (north of Simferopol) and to make their way to the Crimea's ports. The majority of these were "devastated peasants dressed in rags."[71] The Russian government initially made little effort to halt this migration which conformed with the wishes of the highest authorities in the land. A governmental official sent from St. Petersburg to the Crimea to assess

[68] Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 9 p. 334.
[69] Goldenberg. op. cit. no. 65. p. 73.
[70] Totleben. op. cit. no. 4. p. 541.
[71] Vol'fson. op. cit. no. 22. p. 190.

this migration (known in the sources only as Gerngross) traveled through the Crimean Tatar countryside declaring that the Crimean Tatars were unproductive and untrustworthy peasants who were to be encouraged to emigrate.[72]

Throughout the Crimea, other Russian officials similarly encouraged the peninsula's Muslim population to emigrate from the Empire. Russian officials in the city of Evpatoriia, for example, publicly announced Tsar Alexander's decree on the desirability of the Tatars' departure to the accompaniment of drums in the town square.

As the emigration movement snowballed, however, the local administration's attitude towards the departure of the Muslim peasantry began to change. It soon became apparent that the Crimea's Muslim population was not emigrating in the thousands, but in the *tens of thousands*. Russian *pomeshchiks* in particular became seriously alarmed when whole estates lost their *barshchina*-paying peasants. The government itself became concerned when entire tax paying villages and productive districts began to lose their hard working field hands. With the departure of the Crimea's agrarian work force, land value in the Crimea plummeted and many Crimean *pomeshchiks,* who had previously encouraged the departure of the Crimean Tatar peasantry, faced the daunting prospect of financial ruin as a result of the very exodus they had themselves encouraged.

Towards the end of 1860, the Crimean *pomeshchiks* summoned an urgent all-Crimean meeting in Simferopol to discuss this problem that few had foreseen. According to a contemporary source, the Crimean magnates came to the conclusion that the emigration of the Tatars "was costing the state close to 300,000 meek, gentle, submissive, tax-paying subjects. As to the region itself, in the end it will be forever devastated. The Tatars are the only working force in the peninsula."[73] The following account of this extraordinary meeting of Crimean landowners which took place towards the end of the summer of 1860 shows how sharply the position of this class towards the Crimean Tatars had changed:

[72] Like many Russian officials, Gerngross stood to personally profit from the departure of the Muslim peasants who occupied prime land in the Crimean Peninsula. Markevich claims that, after having encouraged the migration of the Crimean Tatars from the Empire, Gerngross then purchased a house and plot of land (presumably at deflated price) in the Tatar village of Büyük Lambat (Large Lantern) on the southern coast. Markevich. op. cit. no. 9. pp. 402-403.
[73] Shcherban' op. cit. no. 6. p. 36.

> On August 1860 a special, extraordinary meeting of Crimean *pomeshchiks* was held. There was only one question on the agenda—how to prevent any further Tatar departures. Many tears were shed here concerning the exit of the Tatars who had been treated as 'slouchers' and 'idlers' by these very *pomeshchiks*. There were bitter arguments as the *pomeshchiks* blamed one another for exploiting the peasants.[74]

Motivated by the pragmatic goal of preventing their own financial ruin, the powerful Crimean *pomeshchiks* sent an urgent message to St. Petersburg calling for a halt to the issuing of emigration passports to the departing Crimean Tatars. Fear that the emigration movement would spread to the Volga Tatar region also rose at this time and the Russian government saw the continued migration of its Crimean Muslim subjects as a real threat.

It is also interesting to note that Russian officials in the Crimea felt that the religious motives for the Crimean Tatar migration were so real that they made an effort at this time to prove that there was no verse in the Qur'an calling for the emigration of Tatars from the Russian Empire.[75] As the Russian government's policy towards the Crimean Tatars changed, albeit for purely economic reasons, Crimean officials began, at last, to analyze the causes of this mass migration of the hard-working Crimean Muslim class whose value they appear to have underestimated.

Explanations for the Migration of 1860-61

By the winter of 1860 the rate of migration had tapered off due to poor conditions associated with traveling across the stormy Black Sea during this season. By the spring of the following year the Russian government had reversed its stance on the issue of the Crimean Tatar emigration and had canceled the issuance of passports to the Muslim population. Although the migration of Crimean Tatars continued in 1861, this movement was much smaller than that of the previous year (only 11,000 departed in this year) and soon came to a halt. The decision to halt the migration was taken in order to protect "the landowners of the southern shore and, in particular the great princes of the Tsarist administration and the governor himself" who

[74] Vol'fson. op. cit. no. 22. p. 192.
[75] Totleben. op. cit. no. 4. p. 537.

feared the migration movement would spread from the steppes to their valued estates on the southern coast.[76]

When calm again returned to the Crimea in late 1861, stunned Russian officials came to the conclusion that the mass emigration of the previous year had cost the Tauride Province a full two thirds of its Tatar population of approximately 300,000. It was only by preventing the departure of the south-coast Muslims that this important agricultural element had not participated in the general emigration which had begun to spread to this region in the fall of 1861. It is ironic that a Crimean Tatar presence in the Crimean *Dar al-Harb* (which later provided the seed for the rise of a Crimean Tatar national identity) may have thus been *forcefully* maintained by Russian *pomeshchiks* for strictly economic reasons.

In the aftermath of the Great Migration of 1860-61 Crimean officials began to look for the underlying causes for this movement, which had already begun to have a devastating impact on the peninsula's economy. Totleben recorded his findings on the subject after interviewing departing Crimean Muslims and left the following account:

> To the question of 'Why are you leaving?' the Tatars answered: 'I don't know'...'It is necessary to go'...'The *pomeshchik* is bad'...'If they permit us to go, it means go'...'If one goes we should all go'... 'The district has been hurt'...'The Tsar is far off, but the sky is higher'. A kind-hearted elder said to me 'We have eaten Russian bread for 60 years, God give health to the Tsar.'[77]

As in the past, there was interest among Russian officials in the role that religion had played in the Crimean Muslims' decision to leave the Russian Empire for the Ottoman Empire. In his article on the emigration, Vol'fson stressed the religious factor as a motive for the Tatar migrations. According to this account:

> A wide agitation took place among the Tatars with the assistance of the Muslim clergy of Turkey. They spread false rumors that the Sultan had raised new cities to which he invited all worshippers of Mohammed, that the Sultan would give the best land without rent fees to settlers, when necessary he would give a pair of oxen and a horse to be paid for over a 10 year period, that there was free land in Turkey sufficient for 300,000 people, that a day's wages there was 3 rubles, that every settler would receive 14 kopecks a day for a year

[76] Vol'fson. op. cit. no. 22. p. 189.
[77] Totleben. op. cit. no. 4. p. 541.

> etc. The Turkish agents were well dressed, with large amounts of money in their pockets, and circulated among the cities and countryside relating how 'wonderful' and 'blessed' life was in Turkey. The agitators were helped by the *mullahs* who speculated on the religiosity of the ignorant Tatars. The 'infidels are robbing you' they said 'it is not necessary to endure this any longer, God himself has led you to resettle in Turkey.' Leading the drive to *hijra*-the arrival of the messiah-(sic) the *mullahs* declared that all those who did not desire to emigrate to Turkey were 'unbelievers.'[78]

Russian officials were convinced that there were internal factors operating within the Crimean Muslim community causing the strange departure of the majority of the Crimea's Tatar population (millenarian movements calling for *hijra* to the lands of the Caliph, i.e. 'fanaticism') and Markevich states "The agitation of the Turks certainly played a role in this emigration and appeals in the name of the Caliph under the *Sançak-i Serif* (Banner of the Prophet)."[79] The great 20th century Crimean Tatar poet Hamdi Giray described these internal calls for migration in his work entitled *Hicret (hijra)*. Giray has a Crimean *mullah* proclaim "There is no life for Muslims here in this land anymore! It is time to move to the *Ak Toprak* (White Soil of the Sultan)!" while the common folk cried "It is Allah's will. It is the end of the world *(Ahir Zaman)*. It is our *kismet*."[80]

A contemporary, Haji Murat Ibrahimbeili, however, remarked that "The propaganda of Turkey and England would not have been effective in influencing the intelligent population if there had not been internal socio-political causes, which produced dissatisfaction among the masses of people. Tsarism took away land from the local inhabitants, evoking sharp dissatisfaction among them."[81] A Russian landlord of the period points to the same multi-causal roots for the Crimean Tatars' migration even while describing the role of religious figures in calling up this *hijra*:

> From the start of Spring, Turkish emissaries, *mullahs* of course, inundated the Crimea and preached among the mosques of all of its cities and villages on the necessity of Muslims to migrate under the banner of the Turkish sultan since, they added, this was declared in the Qur'an. The soil for this propaganda was, however, incredibly fertile. The steppe

[78] Vol'fson. op. cit. no. 22. p. 187-188.
[79] Markevich.op. cit. no. 6. p. 396.
[80] Hamdi Giray. *Hicret.* Istanbul; 1927.
[81] Smirnova. op. cit. no. 51. p. 40.

> Tatars were actually horribly oppressed; more than feudal slaves in times past.[82]

Totleben concurred and stated "It is obvious that all these preceding causes and the totality of the circumstances were enough, in a short period of time, to incite the entire population, without the excitement of fanaticism to which many solely ascribe the migration."[83]

The migrations of 1860-61 may have also been an example of what sociologists call a 'stock effect', in which emigration is perpetuated by communication links between those in the new homeland and those left behind. It must be remembered that the mass migration of approximately 100,000 Crimean Muslims to the Ottoman empire in 1792, and the smaller out-migrations in the interim divided many patriarchal Crimean Tatar Muslim families and traditionally tight-knit villages between the Ottoman and Russian Empires. Contemporary sources mention communication between the Tatar diasporas of the Dobruca and Anatolia on one hand, and the Tatar population of the Crimea on the other. Word of these émigrés' settlement in the Ottoman Empire and their comparative sense of security on the 'white soil' of the Sultan-Caliph would have certainly reached relatives and friends in the old home lands. These stories may have been influential in enabling the pre-modern Crimean Muslim peasantry to imagine the *Memleket-i Islam* (Islamic Realm, i.e. the Ottoman Empire) as an alternative homeland. Similarly, when word of the troubles that the 1860 wave of emigrants were later facing in the Ottoman Empire reached the Crimea, it may have acted as a later deterrent to further migrations.

19th Century *Hijra* to the Ottoman Empire

After experiencing the devastation of the Crimean War and three quarters of a century of land confiscation, the reports from friends and kin in the idealized lands of the Ottoman Caliph would have provided a most powerful incentive for many oppressed mid-19th

[82] N.P. "Iz Vospominanii Byvshago Krymskago Pomeshchika." *Russkaia Starina.* vol. 131. 1907. p. 164.
[83] Totleben. op. cit. no. 4. p. 357. In a similar vein, Fisher writes "It seems clear, however, that such 'agitation', even if it was extensive, would have had little chance of success without Russian provocations." Fisher. op. cit. no. 15. p. 361.

century Crimean Muslims to abandon their Russian homeland for the opportunity to live in the *Dar al-Islam*. For these 19th century *muhacirs*, the Ottoman Empire had become an 'imagined homeland' and the *umma* an 'imagined community'.[84] Tens of thousands of Crimean Muslims had sold their possessions and followed their *ak sakals* (lit. 'white beards', village elders) and *mullahs* in a migration that combined both the hope of preserving their community's religious identity and finding salvation in socio-economic terms in the *ak toprak* of the Sultan.

The *muhacir destans* (religious-emigrant ballads) which became an integral part of 19th century Crimean Muslim culture are replete with the imagery of Islam and reflect the influence of religion in many Tatars' decision to emigrate to the land of the Caliph. Throughout the 19th century, Crimean Tatar *kedays* (traveling bards) sang of the sorrow of migration and their songs captured the panic that swept the Crimean countryside during this dark period.[85] Ballads from this genre also speak of the veneration the simple Crimean Muslim peasants felt upon arriving in the minaret-studded skyline of Istanbul, the sprawling capital of the Sultan-Caliph. For the 19th century *muhacir*, the first sight of the Sultan's Topkapı palace dominating the bay of Istanbul's Golden Horn, with the towering minarets of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque (the Blue Mosque), the Suleimaniye Mosque and Hagia Sophia as a backdrop, would have had considerable religious symbolism. 19th century accounts similarly report that Circassian immigrants arriving in the Sultan's lands in Syria removed their shoes before walking on the holy soil of this region. Many Crimean *muhacirs* would have had a similar feeling of spiritual awe upon arriving on the 'white soil' of the Ottoman Caliph.[86]

The Crimean Tatars and other Russian Muslims were not alone in migrating to the core of the Ottoman Empire during this period. Tens of thousands of Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), Albanians, Balkan Turks, Pomaks and Muslims from lands occupied by European powers, such as Algeria and Tunisia, also migrated to the heartland

[84] Kirimli states "Traditionally, the primary interest of the average Crimean Tatar in Turkey was the religious one, as this was the principle basis of his own self-identification. No doubt, the Ottoman Empire, as seat of the Caliph, held a certain mystical significance for him." Hakan Kirimli. *National Movements and National Identity Among the Crimean Tatars (1905-1916)*. Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1996. p. 151.

[85] Battal Taymas. "La Litterature des Tatars de Crimee." *Philogiae Turcicae Fundamenta*. Paris; Aquis Mattiacis Apud Francisum Steiner. 1974. p. 787.

[86] Seteney. op. cit. no. 46. p. 41.

of the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the 19th century under the influence of their village *hojas* (Islamic teachers).[87]

The *muhacir destans* from the 19th century Crimea with an apocalyptic tone have their equivalents in songs from the Muslim Balkans after 1876. These songs of departure evoke the sorrow of leaving traditional homelands that are symbolically consumed by fire and disaster with the arrival of Christian (Serbian, Austrian, Romanian, Bulgarian, etc.) rule. In the Crimean context, the *destans* also speak of the sorrow experienced by simple Crimean Muslim peasants who felt compelled to leave their cherished villages, farms and hereditary stone houses, which had been passed on from generation to generation. The following *destan*, collected from Crimean Tatars by an early 20th century Russian anthropologist, is fairly typical of the *muhacir destan* genre and clearly demonstrates the importance of Islam in 19th century Crimean migrations to the Ottoman Empire.

> Let me tell you about the situation in the Crimea,
> Neither young women nor young man remains in her,
> They all burn with the longing to migrate to the Islamic lands,
> Look down on us God, we are leaving the Crimea!
>
> What a wonderful climate is in the Crimea!
> But strife is not solved in her according to the *shariah* (Qur'anic law)
> Why does the *Padishah* (Sultan, i.e. Tsar) accuse us of rebellion?
> Look down on us God, we are leaving the Crimea!
>
> At one time they continually took passports,
> The officials benefited, but the people were ruined,
> All Muslims, without exception hurry to acquire passports,
> Look down on us God, we are leaving the Crimea!
>
> The well-to-do acquire passports without hindrance,
> The poor people are driven to despair,
> The mosques and *medreses* are boarded up,
> Look down on us God, we are leaving the Crimea![88]

Many of the popular songs of migration that were sung by both the diaspora groups of the Ottoman Empire and those that remained in the Russian Empire are named for the home village of the *destan's* author. Songs of this sort provide insight into the 19th century

[87] Kemal Karpat. "The Hijra from Russia and the Balkans." *Muslim Travelers. Muslim Travelers, Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination*. ed. Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori. London; Routledge 1990. p. 133. and Justin McCarthy. "Muslims in Ottoman Europe: Population from 1800-1912." *Nationalities Papers*. vol. 28. no. 1. 2000. p. 35.

[88] P. V. Maslov. et. al. *Krym. Khrestomatiia po Istorii Kraiia*. pt. 1. Simferopol; Krymskoe Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo. 1930. p. 240.

Crimean Muslim emigrants' sociology and give a unique insight into their motives for leaving the Crimea. The following *destan,* written by an emigrant from the Crimean village of Soğuk Su (Cold Water) in the southern Crimea, became particularly popular in Anatolia among emigrants who, having migrated to the Ottoman Empire, found themselves longing for the cherished *yeşil ada* (green isle) of the Crimea. While the loss of rhyme in the translation certainly detracts from the ballad's poignant symbolism, its message of longing for the Tatars' home villages in the Crimea is clear:

> We are setting off on a voyage, having left behind our village,
> We know not what we do and we find ourselves lost!
> Soğuk Su is famous for its cleft cliffs;
> Truly my love, our village was left in vain!
>
> When the wind blows strongly, the leaves blow from the trees;
> We were not able to take a handful of soil from our village!
> We are setting off, forsaking our village and watching the clouds;
> With who will we frolic as the flowers have been scattered?
>
> We do not want to leave, but the *pomeshchik* said 'depart!'
> If we happen to die on the sea, our bodies will be devoured by fish!
> In Soğuk Su there are five apple orchards,
> Never before was there such sadness!
>
> Soğuk Su's orchards stretch for 100 versts,
> From the village abandoned by us, we set off with 100 rubles!
> When we sat on the ferry, we were in a panic,
> And now we are no longer fit to live in the Crimea!
>
> Soğuk Su's fountain...the sea and the ocean,
> Let our name remain and call us emigrants!
> Glory to the mosques and minarets of Istanbul,
> Upon embarking on the ferry my head spun;
>
> Friends, my sister remains in the Crimea!
> The fruit in the garden of the Count is ripening early,
> And a fire has descended on the Crimea![89]

After 1861, those Crimean Tatars who remained in the Tauride Province, which was described in the Ottoman Tatar diaspora as "a land of fire", increasingly found themselves a minority in their own homeland. From a demographic perspective the century-long advance of Slavic settlers into the southern Ukraine at the expense of the indigenous Turco-Muslim population had made a great step

[89] S.B. Efetov. and B.I. Filonenko. "Pesni Krymskikh Tatar" *Izvestiia Tavricheskogo Obshchestvo Istorii Arkheologii i Etnografii.* no. 1. (58) Simferopol. 1927. p. 71.

forward with this migration. The Crimean Tatars would never again be a majority in their traditional hearth and the Crimea's plains, like those of the Kuban before them, had been opened up for Slavic colonization.

With the departure of the bulk of the Crimea's Nogai inhabitants, the majority of Crimean Tatars remaining in the Crimean homeland were concentrated in the Yaila hills and mountains of the southern Crimea and along the southern shore. Hundreds of steppe villages had been abandoned in the Great Migration and Crimean Tatar life was now centered in small terraced coastal villages, such as Gurzuf, Uskut, Tarak Taş, Kizil Taş, Yalta, Alupka, Alushta, Dereköy, Gaspra, Büyük Lambat, Soğuk Su, Simeiz, Sudak or smaller villages in the Yaila hinterland. As the stunned Tatar remnant living in the Crimea's south surveyed the transformation of their homeland following from the exodus of 1859-61, they saw a land that had been fundamentally changed. The Crimea was now a Russian land, Russian was the language and culture of the towns, bureaucracy and, increasingly, of the countryside as tens of thousands of Slavic peasants from the neighboring mainland provinces of Ekaterinoslav, Kursk, Poltava, Chernigov, Kharkov and Voronezh filled the places vacated by the Nogai emigrants. In addition to the influx of simple Slavic peasants, the Russian elite built pleasure palaces on the coast and the royal Romanov dynasty itself had a palace erected at Lividia on the outskirts of the Tatar village of Yalta.

In the face of this settlement movement, the unstable Muslim community of the Crimea continued to find ways to define itself in traditional Islamic terms and to look to the Islamic Ottoman Empire for salvation. After 1861, the Crimea's remaining Muslim population continued to live in fear in their Russian homeland and to await the issuing of every edict by the White Tsar with growing apprehension. In this environment, any decree from the government could spell the end of Islam in the Crimea and impel the faithful to emigrate to the lands of the Caliph to preserve their way of life and their religious identity.

CHAPTER SIX

SIGNS AND PORTENTS. THE TATARS OF THE CRIMEA IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 1860-61 MIGRATION

There is a general consensus in the Crimean Tatar and Russian-Soviet sources concerning the detrimental effects of the post-Crimean War Crimean Muslim migrations to the Crimea's economy. According to all accounts, the loss of this industrious agrarian class, which had for centuries mastered the Crimea's unique environment, took a heavy toll on the peninsula's agricultural production. There is also agreement among the sources that the Crimea's Muslim population continued their migrations to the Ottoman Empire as the 19th century progressed, to the continuing detriment of the Crimea's economy. As in earlier eras, the debate once again revolves around the Crimean Tatars' motives for abandoning the Russian Empire.

In his account, Shcherban' states "The Tatars love the Crimea, from the letters of the first emigrants they know what sort of fate awaits them in Turkey, and they leave their home fields solely due to the fact that they have been seized by religious fanaticism."[1] Sources from the Crimean Tatar community treat such accounts with contempt and consider views of this sort to be anti-Tatar. Dr. Ahmet Özenbaşli, for example, writes "some compatriots with inferiority complexes claim that the migrations were not mandatory, but optional. We in response to this claim argue that these migrations were a result of the policies and tactics of the imperialist government."[2] It is to the analysis of both the causes of the late 19th century Crimean Tatar emigrations and their results that this work now turns.

[1] N. Shcherban'. "Pereselenie Krymskikh Tatar." *Russkii Vestnik.* 1860. vol. 30. no. 11-12. p. 41.

[2] Ahmet Özenbaşli. "Çarlik Hakimiyetinde Kırım Faciası" *Emel.* no. 110. Jan.-Feb. 1979. p. 30.

The Results of the Crimean Tatar Exodus in Demographic Terms

From a statistical perspective the post-Crimean War migrations to the Ottoman Empire had certainly weakened the claim of the remaining Crimean Tatars to their lands, which had previously included both the Crimean Peninsula and adjacent steppes. The Nogai component on the Crimean steppe and plains to the north of the peninsula (the Berdiansk district primarily) had, in particular, been diluted by the emigration of 1859-1861. There are slight inconsistencies in the statistics from the period but a general picture of the size of the emigrations from this region can be formed. Markevich puts the number of Nogais in this northern area prior to the 1861 emigrations at 46,229 while de Hell claims there were 52,000 Nogais residing in the Azov-Molochnaia Voda steppe to the north of the Crimea in the 1840s.[3] Regardless of the precise size of this population, Markevich claims almost all of these Nogais had disappeared from the mainland steppe by 1861.

The Tatar population of the Crimean Peninsula itself had also been diluted in demographic terms after 1861 and in a short period found itself a minority in its own homeland. There had been between 275,000 and 295,000 Tatars residing in the Tauride Province *prior* to the Crimean War according to the most reliable sources.[4]

After analyzing the sources, Pinson concludes that somewhere between 30,000 and 40,000 of these Tatar inhabitants of the Crimea emigrated during the course of the war, lowering the number of Crimean Tatars in the peninsula prior to the great migration of 1859-61.[5] Markevich claims that in 1860-61 approximately 135,000 Tatars permanently emigrated from the Crimean Peninsula itself and 46,000 Nogais from the steppes to the north (for a total of approximately 180,000) and this left a population of just over 100,000 Crimean Tatars in the Crimea by 1865.[6] From a combined popu-

[3] Arsenii Markevich. "Pereselenie Krymskikh Tatar v Turtsiiu v Sviazy s Naseleniia v Krymu." *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk.* 1928. p. 396. Xavier Hommaire de Hell. *Travels in the Steppes of the Caspian Sea.* London; Chapman and Hall. 1847. p. 270.

[4] Markevich. op. cit. no. 3. p. 403. P.I. Keppen claims there were only 275,000 Crimean Tatars in the Crimea. P.I. Keppen. *Etnograficheskaia Karta Rossi.* 1852. quoted in Markevich on page 390.

[5] Mark Pinson. "Russian Policy and the Emigration of the Crimean Tatars to the Ottoman Empire. 1854-1862." *"Güney Doğu Araştimalari Dergisi.* no.2. 1974. p. 108.

[6] Markevich. op. cit. no. 3. p. 403.

lation that may have reached close to 300,000 prior to the Crimean War (including the Nogai-inhabited steppe districts of the Tauride province to the north of the Crimea) the Tatar population of the Tauride had thus been reduced to around 100,000 by 1865.[7] The majority of the Tauride's Tatar population (approximately two-thirds of the total population) or approximately 200,000 Tatars had thus emigrated during the Crimean War and in the great migration of 1859-61.[8] Ottoman sources, which were not as systematic or precise as those in the Russian Empire, roughly support these statistics. According to an Ottoman estimate, there were 321,000 Muslims *(ehl-i Islam)* living in the Crimea prior to the migration and by 1861 200,000 of these had migrated to the Ottoman Empire.[9]

In addition, Fisher mentions the existence of 27,000 Tatars in the Kherson governorship located on the Ukrainian mainland to the north-west of the Crimea in 1868.[10] By 1897 this number had declined to a mere 14,000, less than 1% of the territory's population.[11] This number was to decline further in the succeeding century and, with the rise of a national movement among the small enclave of Crimean Tatars concentrated in the Crimean Peninsula, the steppe areas of the Tauride Province (mainland Ukraine) would not be imagined as part of the Crimean Tatar national homeland.

Although contemporary sources did not record the sub-ethnic identity of the Tatar emigrants who left the Tauride in 1860, most of those migrating from the Tauride came from the Nogai-inhabited steppes of the Crimea's interior and the steppes of the Ukrainian mainland. While several thousand disillusioned Nogais did return to the Crimea after 1861, the Nogai element in the peninsula was, from this period forward, a distinct minority. The remaining Nogai Tatars were largely limited to a score of villages in the Kerch peninsula (eastern Crimea), the Perekop/Çongar district in the northern Crimea and the Evpatoriia vicinity in the West.[12]

[7] Pinson. op. cit. no. 5. p. 109.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Bedri Habiçoğlu. *Kafkasya'dan Anadolu'ya Göçler ve Iskanlari.* Istanbul; Nart Yayincilik. 1993. p. 73.
[10] Alan Fisher. "Emigration of Muslims from the Russian Empire in the Years After the Crimean War." *Jahrbucher für Geschichte Ost Europas.* vol. 35. no. 3. 1987. p. 365.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Markevich. op. cit. no. 3. 403.

The Nogai Remnant of the Northern Caucasus

A slightly larger Nogai element remained in the Kuban plains north of the Caucasus than in the Crimea, but these herders were too few in number to resist mass Slavic colonization of their lands in the second half of the 19th century. In a secret report dating from just after the mass emigration of Nogais in 1860 a Russian official proclaimed "vast stretches of land, formerly occupied by Nogai Tatars, now stand empty, they are ready for settlers."[13] Smirnova mentions that the land left by the Nogais was claimed by Russian *pomeshchiks* and officials and "Through these people Tsarism created a firm control over the borders of Russia."[14]

In the final days of the USSR there were, according to one estimate, approximately 65,000 Nogais still living in the plains of the northern Caucasus.[15] These Nogais are divided into the Ak Nogai (White Nogai) tribal confederation, the Kara Nogai (Black Nogai) confederation and a smaller grouping known as the Achikulak tribal confederacy. Clan names within these larger divisions still reflect the names of the great Nogai hordes which was once roamed the Desht-i Kipchak, such as the Yedisan, Buçak, Djambulaq, and Yediçkul nomadic clans.

In the Soviet period these traditional herders underwent collectivization, which brought an end to their centuries-old patterns of animal husbandry, and were forced into collective enterprises. During the Great Delimitation of Soviet administrative homeland-republics of the 1920s, the Nogais did not receive administrative-territorial recognition. Instead they found themselves divided among the territorial boundaries of administrative units created for the surrounding ethno-national groups, such as the Chechens, Dagestanis (a multi-ethnic grouping), and Circassians. National development among the clan-based Kuban Nogais has, therefore, been considerably retarded due to their lack of state-sponsored nation building during the Soviet period known as *korenizatsiia* (indigenous positive discrimination).

While myriad small ethnic groups in the USSR received the full benefit of Moscow's support in the development of homogenizing

[13] Alan Fisher. op. cit. no. 10. p. 365.
[14] Ia. S. Smirnova et. al. *Nogaitsy, Istoriko-Etnograficheskii Ocherk.* Cherkesk; Stavropol'skoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo. 1988. p. 40.
[15] Richard Weekes. *Muslim Peoples. A World Ethnographic Survey.* Maba-Yoruk. Westport Conn. Greenwood Press. 1984. p. 553.

national identities during the early Soviet period, the Nogais have, therefore, not succeeded in developing a modern, unifying sense of national identity or a related sense of 'fatherland'.[16] James Olson further points out that the Nogais' loyalties to their subgroups are much stronger than any loyalty to any over-arching sense of Nogai identity.[17]

Those Nogais who have found themselves in the northern flat lands of the territory of Dagestan (a multi-ethnic republic within the Russian Federation inhabited primarily by Kumyks, Avars, Lezgins, Chechens, and Dargins) have found greater opportunity than their kin in neighboring Nadterechny district of Chechnya or the Stavropol district of Russia for maintaining their identity and language.[18] There have, however, been clashes between Nogais who inhabit the plains of northern Dagestan known as the Nogai Raion (Region) and other Dagestani peoples. In June 2000, for example, the theft of seven horses from the Nogai village of Akutan Akushinskii by Dargins (Dagestan's second largest ethnic group) led to inter-ethnic fighting in which more than 400 people were involved.[19]

In spite of their small successes in Dagestan, the Nogais of the northern Caucasus are gradually being assimilated by the neighboring Russians, Circassians and Kumyks. In addition, many Nogais in the Russian republic of Dagestan live in the Khasavyurt region which is inhabited by the Akkin Chechens. This border area has seen considerable spill-over from the conflict in the 1990s between the secessionist militias in neighboring Chechnya and the Russian Federation army forces. In the Fall of 1999 rogue Chechen forces led

[16] The success of groups who did receive territorial units offers clear evidence of the tremendous role that Soviet nation-building process played in the development (or lack there of in the Nogais' case) of national identities in this state. For example, The Evenks, a small, arctic reindeer herding people who received a territorial autonomy developed a mobilized national identity which has enabled them to defend their indigenous rights to land in the Russian north since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

[17] James Olson. *An Ethno-Historical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires.* Westport Conn. Greenwood Press. 1994. p. 514. According to Alexandre Bennigsen and Enders Wimbush the feeling of kinship with these tribes is still stronger than the awareness of belonging to a larger Nogai nation. Alexandre Bennigsen and Enders Wimbush. *Muslims of the Soviet Empire.* Bloomington; Indiana Univ. Press. 1986. p. 171.

[18] Robert Bruce Ware. "Conflict in the Caucasus: An Historical Context and a Prospect for Peace." *Central Asian Survey.* vol. 17. no. 2. June 1988. p. 351.

[19] "Horse Theft Sparks Inter-Ethnic Violence in Dagestan." *Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty Newsline.* vol. 4. no. 113. June 12, 2000.

by field commanders united with fundamentalist Muslim groups in Dagestan itself in a bloody campaign to detach the Khasavyurt, Tsumadan and Botlikh districts from Russian Dagestan and it can be surmised that this has negatively impacted the local Nogais.[20] Those Nogais who found themselves in the northern, flat districts of Chechnya have almost certainly experienced similar disruption as a result of this devastating war.[21] The future of this small people, who have no unifying sense of national identity or territorial unity in an officially recognized homeland, obviously remains uncertain.

The Impact of the Crimean Tatar Exodus on the Crimean Economy

The strange migration of approximately 40% of the Crimea's total population after the Crimean War had a considerable impact on the Tauride province's agriculture and caused considerable economic dislocation in the succeeding years. Although the Russian government dispatched several thousand soldiers to the devastated province to help with the harvesting of crops as an emergency step, this stopgap measure could not begin to solve the problems that had been created by the Tatar exodus.

Prior to the migration, the Nogais had cultivated spring wheat and drought resistant millet on the dry coastal steppes of the northern two-thirds of the Crimea and adjacent plains of the mainland. This combination of livestock raising, grain farming, haying and seasonal migrations provided the Nogais with a secure livelihood prior to the massive confiscation of land experienced by the this people in the late 18th and 19th centuries.[22] The Kipchak-Nogais of the Crimean plain, which was known for its hot dry summers and fierce winters had, over the centuries, mastered the art of constructing artificial irrigation canals and wells to cultivate this region and sup-

[20] On September 13, 2000 it was reported that a Nogai who fought with Chechen field commander Emir Khottab was killed in a firefight with Dagestani police, perhaps indicating some interest in the Wahhabi version of Islam espoused by Khottab among the Nogais. *Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty Newsline.* Sept. 13, 2000.

[21] The Nogai-inhabited lowlands of Chechnya north of the Terek River were not historically as densely populated with Chechens and this area has seen less combat in the recent Russo-Chechen Wars than the mountains and foothills of southern Chechnya.

[22] David Lynch. *The Conquest, Settlement and Initial Development of New Russia.* New Haven; Yale Univ. Press. 1969. p. 84.

port a considerable livestock economy. The arriving Slavic settlers in these plains had been forced to rely on the neighboring Nogais to learn how to grow grain in this climate, which differed markedly from the *chernozem* lands ('black earth' lands of the central and northern Ukraine).[23] With the abandonment of this plain by the Nogais, the art of constructing, maintaining and utilizing artificial irrigation on this steppe had, to a noticeable extent, been lost.

When the Russian authorities attempted to begin the process of replacing the Nogais with Bulgarian, German, and Slavic peasants, they found that these settlers had considerable difficulty in adapting to this steppe zone's unique conditions. A report from this period describes these problems claiming "The population of the steppe zone are meeting with unfamiliar obstacles. In a country without trees or water, where saline water is obtained from a few wells and procured after rain from pools, only the Tatars can live who, over the course of several centuries, became accustomed to these locales and content with the most fundamental of requirements for life."[24] Travelers through the emptied steppes of the northern Crimea and foothills in the Simferopol region describe a land that had, since the departure of the Nogais, been wrecked in agricultural terms. A contemporary source, for example, comments:

> Leaving for Asia, the Tatars carried away with them the secret of their prosperity and success; not one colonist, be he Russian, Bulgarian or German, could produce on this unfamiliar soil those gardens and vineyards which gave an abundant harvest to its beloved sons, the descendants of the first inhabitants of the Tauride...The animal life here has also gradually vanished; species of animals have dwindled; camels and bulls have become rare, hoofed cattle, sheep and goat have diminished by half, and the small herds of horses which are now met with on the steppe cannot compare with the former Tatar horses.[25]

While one must be careful not to make too casual a nexus between the indigenous Tatar population and the natural environment of the Crimea, this native element certainly did possess many valued traditional agricultural skills that had been shaped by the Crimea's environment over the centuries.[26] It was only natural that the mass

[23] Ibid.

[24] E.I. Totleben. "O Vyselenii Tatar iz Kryma v 1860 godu" *Russkaia Starina*. June 1893 p. 646.

[25] V.E. Vozgrin. *Istoricheskie Sud'by Krymskikh Tatar*. Moscow; Misl. 1992. p. 339.

[26] The Russians, for example, did eventually expand cultivation on the Crimean steppe using modern agricultural techniques; the Crimean administration enacted measures to prevent the overgrazing of the Yaila for ecological reasons; Crimean officials promulgated laws to protect the southern forests throughout the nineteenth century etc.

exodus of this useful peasant class had a negative impact on the region's agricultural development. Russians in the Crimea, most of whom appear to have had good relations with the Tatars (as was often the case between Christians and Muslims in Eastern Europe prior to the advent of nationalism), bemoaned the loss of their hard-working Muslim neighbors in their accounts. Evgenii Markov, for example, wrote:

> No one was hurt like this peaceful and useful tribe. It was dishonored with charges of treason and forced to abandon its ancient homeland where only the Tatars could live without needs. Whoever has been in the Crimea for even one month soon discovers that, with the removal of the Tatars, the Crimea died. They alone transformed the dry sultry steppe and transformed it, mastering the secrets of water extraction and channeling and the cultivation of herds and gardens in places where neither Germans or Bulgarians are accustomed. Hundreds of thousands of patient hands were removed from the economy, herds of camels disappeared, where once 30 flock of sheep grazed there is now one, where once there was populated, industrious villages, there is now emptiness. And the desolation, like the former villages, now fills whole districts.[27]

Goldenberg reports similar devastation in the Crimean steppe in his account and writes "There are now no traces of the grains and grasses that existed here then, for the most part this is because the wells, which are so necessary for irrigation of the waterless steppe, which were dug with such marvelous skill by the Tatars are neglected, the fountains are clogged, the rivers dried up and, without artificial irrigation, the region has literally suffocated."[28] Another 19th century source reports of the Nogai plains:

> The villages are rare, the fountains have crumbled or have dried, there is little water; the pitiful remains of emptied huts that one comes across frequently testify to previous settlements, but the pears and cherries have died off, the half wild grape vines and the deserted ravines along forested brooks proclaim that here were once gardens and vineyards and dense wealthy villages leaving as a legacy empty places with their Tatar names; the present occupants of the Crimea are vast cemeteries placed along the road or on hills with many tombstones of various

[27] Evgenii Markov. *Ocherkii Kryma*. Simferopol; Tavria. 1995. p. 122.

[28] M. Goldenberg. "Krym i Krymskie Tatary." *Vestnik Evropy*. no. 6. 1883. p 68.

> colors and forms; several of these stones stand on lonely guard over these valleys of death, but many have crumbled and fallen apart and lie in pieces as after an earthquake.[29]

These 19th century accounts of the Crimean Tatars' irrigation skills lend credence to earlier historical claims that the majority of the Crimean Khanate's inhabitants were involved in agriculture, not plundering. Most importantly, these accounts demonstrate that even the nomadic Nogai element of the Crimea had considerable agricultural skills and ties to its native soil which were sorely missed upon their departure.

It is interesting to note that Slavs who settled on the coasts of Circassia, which had been brutally cleansed of its Circassian population between 1861 and 1864, encountered similar problems in adapting to its climate. Scores of Russian settlers died in the unfamiliar conditions encountered here and many areas remained depopulated well into the 20th century. A Russian contemporary wrote of this region:

> At the end of the 1830s, when the Russians began to construct coastal strongholds, the entire coast and mountain belt adjacent to it was an elaborately cultivated oasis where, alongside wild, impregnable cliffs and eternal forests (now relentlessly felled in all the more accessible places), nestled fine vineyards and lush meadows, even laid out here and there on artificial terraces supplied with water from man-made canals and protected from heavy downpours by artificial channels.
>
> But the bloody war drove out and destroyed the mountain people; their culture was exterminated, the artificial canals became choked up, terraces which had cost so much work crumbled. The spacious gardens and fine vineyards were partly cut down during the war and the period when the country was settled with Russians, or became wild and overgrown, so that now it is difficult to determine where the thicket intertwined with wild vines ends and where the former cultivated area begins.[30]

While 19th century Russian writers were as prone to romanticizing 'pristine native' cultures of less developed peoples as their Western counterparts, the accounts of the negative impact that Russian colonial policies had on the socio-economic status of the peoples of the northern Pontic littoral (by writers of all backgrounds and origins)

[29] Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 25. p. 339.
[30] Barsabi Baytugan. "The North Caucasus". *Studies on the Soviet Union.* (New Series). Vol. XI. no. 1, 1971. p. 11.

are too consistent to be ignored. It can be safely argued that, prior to the introduction of the railroad, massive Slavic colonization and industrialization, the plains of the Crimea (and coasts of neighboring Circassia) seem to have suffered an economic decline that was directly related to the exodus from this region of the indigenous agricultural populations. From a purely economic perspective then, the departure of the Crimean Tatars from the plains of the Tauride was a short-term disaster for Russian landowners and the local administration.

The Tatars of the South and the Migration of 1860-61

Contrary to their views of the Nogai Tatars, Crimean administrators and landowners seem to have recognized the value of the Tatar peasants of the Yaila and coast region and they acted decisively to prevent the departure of the Tats in 1860. They, like Totleben, seem to have felt that "It would be impossible to replace the Tatars who have been occupied here since antiquity in agriculture and viniculture without destroying this area of industry."[31] The migration movement seems to have subsequently been much less pronounced in this region and only 10-15% of those involved in the 1860-61 migration came from this zone.[32] For the most part, Vozgrin claims "the direct descendants of the ancient inhabitants of the peninsula" remained in place in the coastal mountains on this occasion.[33] Vol'fson supports Hakan Kirimli's earlier description of the Yaliboyu Tatars' comparatively smooth adaptation to the Russian capitalist economy (in comparison to the Nogais) and writes "Economically the strongest, the south coast Tatars were well informed about the difficult position of the Turkish peasants and scarcely yielded to agitation."[34]

Another source claims that no Crimean Tatars petitioned to emigrate from the Baidar Valley during the 1860-61 emigration and mentions that the Tat and Yaliboyu Tatars of the south had made

[31] Totleben. op. cit. no. 24. p. 546.
[32] B.M. Vol'fson. "Emigratsiia Krymskikh Tatar v 1860 g." *Istoricheskie Zapiski.* no. 9. 1940. p. 189.
[33] For the Crimea as a whole, the fewest number of emigrants came from the Yalta district on the Crimea's southern coast. Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 25. p. 299.
[34] Vol'fson op. cit. no. 32. p. 192

more progress in learning Russian than the Tatars of the steppes.[35] Markov visited the villages of Big Tarak Taş (Crested Rock) and Little Tarak Taş in the Sudak Valley on the southern coast after the migrations and left the following account of this region's lack of involvement in the previous migration:

> Big Tarak Taş is enveloped in a fold in the mountain and looks completely like a Caucasian *aul*, houses of dark stone, two-storied above the precipice, embrasure upon embrasure; on the road around Little Tarak Taş are brightly dressed Tatars, white-haired elders in turbans; here is solid undisturbed Muslimdom that no outsiders has intruded upon and no one has touched. The emigration of the Tatars, which inflicted a death blow on Crimean Muslimdom, has still not reached the Tarak Taşes. I heard that not one person had left from here and, in both villages, they have preserved all the purity of the period of the Khans. It is obviously a carefree life for the Tatars of the Sudak vale if it is not driven from here by fanaticism or the panicked fear which has seized this entire tribe.[36]

A combination of factors, ranging from the southern Tatars' comparative success in adapting to Russian colonial rule to governmental policies designed to prevent the spread of the migration movement to the south, appear to have kept the bulk of the Yaila and Yaliboyu Tatars tenuously in place during the course of the 1860 migration. While the expulsion of the Circassians to the Ottoman Empire can, by comparison, be safely described as a forced migration, the fact that Russian officials acted to forcefully retain a Tatar presence in the southern Crimea would indicate that the emigrations of the Crimean Muslims to the Ottoman Empire in 1860 was not a clear cut case of forced migration.

Many segments of Russian society, from liberals, and Russian *pomeshchiks* to sympathetic members in the military, actually sought to prevent the out-migration of the Crimean Tatars or sympathized with their plight. Most accounts also indicate that there was no overt antagonism on the grassroots level between the Slavic population of the Crimea and the local Tatars who had, according to most accounts, 'long been used to the sound of church bells.'

While the migration of the 1860-61 seems to have brought a halt to the post-Crimean War anti-Tatar sentiment, the pragmatic Russian *pomeshchiks* appear to have been happy to attract fellow Christians (Bulgars, Germans, Russians and Ukrainians) to take the place of the departed Muslims. As these emigrants arrived in the Crimea, many were given tax incentives and other privileges for settling in this region and others were given land belonging to Tatar communes. As these privileged Christian emigrants filled the Crimean countryside, the engulfed Crimean Muslim minority increasingly turned to its Islamic traditions to create barriers between themselves and the Christian outsiders. To a degree, the Crimean Tatars villagers, perched on their terraced mountainsides, lived in a different world from the surrounding Christian population.

Most Crimean Tatar villages in the south were mono-ethnic. 19th century accounts indicate that this community lived in constant apprehension in the Russian Empire and had come to fear the government's decrees and edicts. In 1874 a governmental edict appears to have fulfilled the Crimean *mullahs'* prophesies of doom. In that year a general conscription decree came from St. Petersburg which many devout Crimean Muslims felt was a sign signaling a change in the government's policy towards the Tatars that would eventually lead to their Christianization. As their kin on the steppe had done 13 years before, thousands of Tat Tatars in the south prepared to leave the Tsar's realms for the Ottoman Empire to protect their Islamic identity.

The Emigration of 1874

As tens of thousands of Slavic settlers poured into the Tauride Province in the 1860s and 1870s, the Crimean Tatar minority, located primarily in the Yaila Mountains and Yaliboyu coastal regions, quickly lost what little security it had previously obtained from its status as the majority population in the Crimean Peninsula. The arrival of scores of Slavic settlers caused further displacements among the indigenous Tatar population and, according to one estimate, by 1880, 47% of the Crimean Tatar population was considered landless.[37] Levitskii remarked on this situation in his article and claimed that the Crimean Tatars had lost three-fourths of their land since the Crimean War:

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[35] G. P. Mart'ianov. "Poslednaia Emigratsiia Tatar iz Kryma v 1874 g." *Istoricheskii Vestnik*. no. 6. p. 702.

[36] Markov. op. cit. no. 27. p. 308.

[37] Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 25. p. 345.

> If one compares the amount of land 25 years ago, which by law of ownership belonged to the Tatar settlers as private property to that remaining in their hands at the start of the recent war, it appears that it has diminished by more than half; after the campaign, however, and especially after the first example of emigration to Turkey, the percentage lost increased by still another quarter.[38]

As the remaining, increasingly landless Tatars of the peninsula (their numbers had gradually risen from the approximately 100,000 in 1861) struggled to cope with this growing loss of land, the Russian government made a decision that was to once again destabilize the Crimean Muslim peasantry. In January 1874 the Russian government announced a decree extending universal military conscription to the Crimean Muslims who, as distrusted *inorodtsy* (internal aliens), had long been exempt from serving in the Russian army. This decision was made as part of the Military Reforms of 1874 which aimed to create a modern mass army along the lines of the Prussian army.[39] Non-Russians from throughout the Empire were to be caught up in this compulsory new service (it was not, however, extended to the Central Asian Muslims until the year 1916).

This edict set off a wave of panic among the Crimean Muslim population that saw serving in the Russian (Christian) army as a direct threat to their Islamic identity. There were sufficient grounds for this fear, for the Russian army had long served a vehicle for the Russification of minorities in the Empire and Orthodox chaplains were found in most military units.

As had been the case in the earlier Muslim Sepoy Rebellion of 1857-58 in British India, there was also a fear among Crimean Muslims that Islamic culinary taboos *(hilal)*, such as the consumption of pork or use of pig byproducts (such as grease in weapons, the Sepoys' cause for grievance) would occur in the Russian army.[40]

There was also the realization in the Crimean Muslim community that if the Russian army did go to war, it would most likely be against the Ottoman Empire. In this case, the Crimean Muslims would be fighting against fellow members of the religious community of Islam and, potentially, against their own Tatar kin living in the lands of the Sultan. In describing the Crimean Muslims' dismay at this time, Etham Gözaydin claims "Young people, who are raised by religious families and brought up this way, considered serving in the Russian army and fighting against their own kin and co-religionist to be a punishment worse than death."[41]

[38] G. Levitskii. "Pereselenie Tatar iz Kryma v Turtsiiu." *Vestnik Evropy*. no. 5. 1882. p. 610.

[39] The reogranized Prussian army had recently defeated the French in the Franco-Prussian War using vast amounts of trained reserves. Alexander Alexiev and Enders Wimbush. *Ethnic Minorities in the Red Army*. Boulder; Westview Press. 1988. p. 17.

[40] This continued to be a real fear for Russian Muslims who were drafted into the army right up until the 20th century. The great rebellion of Central Asian peoples against military drafting in 1916, for example, was caused by Muslims who believed "they would be forced to eat pork and become contaminated by association with the infidels" if they served in the Russian army. Ibid. p. 20.

The Crimean Muslim community had, for a century of Russian rule, kept its identity alive by relying on defensive cultural mechanisms to prevent assimilation by the neighboring Russians. The conscription decree of 1874 represented a direct threat to this identity and once more the call for *hijra* spread in the Crimea. On this occasion, however, it was heard in the valleys and coastal villages of the Yaila and Yaliboyu Tatars who had, for the most, not participated in the previous migrations in large numbers. By the summer of 1874 young Tatar men of conscription age had begun to depart from the Crimea in their hundreds. A 1874 London *Times* article described the departure of the Tatars from this land that had, since the Crimean War, become a part of England's military mythology:

> The new law of universal military recruitment appears by no means to be approved by the followers of the Prophet in this country. The Tartars of the Crimea had been deserting their homes by the thousands until a strict police surveillance checked to some extent the panic; but small Turkish vessels still cruise along the coast and pick up hundreds of fanatics, who appear generally to reach Turkish dominions in a very dilapidated condition.[42]

As on previous occasions, many observers felt that the Crimean Muslims' concepts of Islamic identity and community played a key role in the 1874 migration. A second article appearing in the *Times* claimed that "Mussulman colporteurs are traveling about the country with pamphlets which urge them to leave the Russian Dominions."[43] Tatar *destans* of emigration from 1874 support this contention. The emigration ballads of 1874 are, like those from the 1860s, filled with

[41] Etham Gözaydin. *Kırım. Kırım Türklerinin Yerleşme ve Göçmeleri*. Istanbul; 1948. p. 91.

[42] *Times*. "Mahometan Subjects of Russia." Dec. 4, 1874. p. 8.

[43] *Times*. Sept. 28, 1874. p. 5.

religious symbolism and strike a millenarian note of despair. The following *destan* is typical of the migration songs of 1874-75:

The decision is fate's, the order is God's,
Fire has enveloped the Crimea from every side,
Grief has remained in this land.
The situation in the Crimea has gone from bad to worse!

From the Tsar of Moscow an order has come,
'The Tatars are to be taken into the army'
The Crimean officials visited every place.
The situation in the Crimea has gone from bad to worse!

Let me give you the news, lend me your ear!
Come and listen to what I have to say!
This *hijra* is the legacy of the Prophet!
The situation in the Crimea has gone from bad to worse!

Whosoever accepts *sünnet* (sunni law) as a duty,
Even until the arrival of the judgment day,
The mark of the Muslim is on his forehead.
The situation in the Crimea has gone from bad to worse!

We implored the Tsar and fall wailing,
Our words did not move the golden Ivan,
We burned with the desire of *hijra.*
The situation in the Crimea has gone from bad to worse!

Those who have been conscripted lose their color,
Mothers and fathers shout out and are crushed,
From their hands they are abandoned into the abyss.
The situation in the Crimea has gone from bad to worse!

The judgment day is established here!
The fire is struck in our chests.
The faithful are silenced and quiet.
The situation in the Crimea has gone from bad to worse!

They forced us to the square for drill practice;
'We cannot find time for prayers.
We hope this situation is not permanent.'
The situation in the Crimea has gone from bad to worse!

In Ak Mecit the lament breaks out;
The universe is lost.
All the people cry: 'alas, alas'.
The situation in the Crimea has gone from bad to worse!

With the permission of his lordship, the sultan;
Only you have the remedy for this illness;
We the faithful await the order for *hijra!*
The situation in the Crimea has gone from bad to worse!

There is no glory or fame in the Crimea!
We will not cast aside our zeal for the path of religion!
Having found the path, we will not abandon the *hijra*!
The situation in the Crimea has gone from bad to worse![44]

The Karaim Jews, a small Turkic ethnic group of several thousand that had lived peacefully in the Crimea with their Tatar neighbors for centuries, had a similar sense of prophetic doom associated with losing their religious identity when they were called up for general conscription at an earlier date. At this time ritualized mourning of a sort much akin to that of the Crimean Muslims appeared in the Karaim communities of the southern Crimea.[45] Phillip Miller describes the Karaims' reaction to the news that their young men were to be drafted into the Russian army. "The news came during the Sukkot festival. Days of joy were turned into sadness and moaning; sackcloth was upon all loins and baldness upon every head, at a time of harvest and treading grapes (when there ought to have been) happy voices in the vineyards. How we were filled with terror!"[46]

As the *hijra* migration movement began to grow in the Crimea, local authorities lost no time in moving to halt the Crimean Tatars' departure. Police officials and coastal guards moved to interdict Tatars intending to leave the Crimea aboard Turkish vessels. On several occasions there were clashes resulting in deaths as the desperate Crimean Tatars (usually single males of draft age), in such coastal villages as Gurzuf, Kizil Taş, Uskut, Tuak, and Kapsikhor, fought with coastal police to secretly reach Turkish boats cruising the Crimean coast at night.[47] As news of the Crimean Tatars' growing apprehension reached the Crimean administration, it moved decisively to prevent the rise of another mass emigration movement among the Crimean Muslims.

Semen Mikhailov Vorontsov, the son of Prince Mikhail Vorontsov (whose name was still revered among the Crimean Muslim peasantry for his role as a protector of the Tatars) was dispatched to the region to assuage the Muslims' fears. Prince Mikhailov toured the Muslim villages of the southern coast assuring the Tatar *ak*

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[44] Altan Arashı. "Kırım Türklerinin Muhacir Türküleri ve Halk Destanları." *Emel.* no. 56. 1970. pp. 26-27.

[45] There are in fact many parallels between these two peoples' sense of premodern, religious group identity.

[46] Phillip Miller. *Karaite Separatism in Nineteenth-Century Russia.* Cincinnati; Hebrew Union College Press. 1993. p. 76.

[47] Vol'fson. op. cit. no. 32. p. 195

sakals ('white beards' elders) and *mullahs* that their young men would be allowed to freely practice their religion in the army and further promising that they would be allowed to fulfill their military duty within the Tauride Province.[48] In addition, the Tatars were told that those who were drafted would be allowed to serve in a national cavalry unit attired in traditional native dress, with a *mullah* and a mosque in their barracks. The government expressed its hope that this action would "calm all the Tatar population in the Crimea and prevent the false rumors and gossip which was, in part, followed by the rise of migration throughout the Crimea quite recently."[49]

As news of this decision spread, the calls for migration died down perceptibly, but individuals who feared serving in the army nevertheless continued to slip past coastal guards to board Turkish vessels for the Ottoman Empire. The following eyewitness account given by a Russian resident of the Tatar coastal village of Gurzuf (Byzantine Gurzuvita) in the southern Yalta vicinity provides interesting insight into the conditions surrounding the 1874 Tatar emigration from both a topographical and sociological perspective:

> This Tatar village on the southern shore of the Crimea, 11 versts from Yalta and 30 from Alushta, is in an amphitheater formed from the cliffs and great rocks separated from the Yaila range by volcanic eruptions and thrown into the sea itself, these crags are covered with Tatar homes and dwellings. At this place on the sea, above the waves, are high conical cliffs on which are still visible the traces of ancient castles, ruins of walls and stairs....There in the distance on the waves pitch two or three vessels...These are Turkish *feluccas*, hunting in our waters for dolphins and, on occasion, for Tatars. I saw that these *feluccas* appeared, for the most part, in one and the same place...Occasionally I came across shepherds coming from the mountains, protected by their sheep jackets, with daggers in their belts and leather cases with prayers from the Qur'an on cloth across their shoulders, in buffalo sandals with pointed sheep hats on their brows; on one or two occasions I arrived to meet village youth gathering on the road accompanied by relatives, women and children. With these and others went well known *hojas* (Islamic teachers). I asked who they were. They told me that these people were leaving in search of work...As it appeared later, however, these were fugitives, youth leaving for Turkey to avoid service in the Russian army.[50]

[48] P. Mart'ianov. "Poslednaia Emigratsiia Tatar iz Kryma v 1874 gody". *Istoricheskii Vestnik*. vol. 24. p. 700.
[49] Ibid. p. 699.
[50] Ibid. p. 707.

According to P. Mart'ianov, the only source to specifically analyze the migration of 1874, this migration movement had died out by 1875 and the numbers of those who left for the Ottoman Empire was kept in the low thousands for these two years.[51] Claims in several sources that the migration of 1874 reached 60,000(!) cannot be taken seriously and Vozgrin claims this migration was actually limited to 5,000 emigrants.[52] Mart'ianov attributes the small size of this migration to the government's prudent decision "which should have been made many years ago" to attract the Muslim clergy to its side through new legislation.[53]

During the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78, which saw the destruction of the Tatar community of the Balkans, the Crimean Tatars, having taken an oath of loyalty to the Tsar, remained quite calm. The call for *hijra* did not again resound in the Crimea again until 1893. While some sources estimate that the migration of this year may have reached 20,000, this author has found no demographic statistics or evidence in contemporary Russian sources for a migration of this magnitude and this appears to be an inflated number. In light of the gradual growth in the size of the Crimean Tatar community in the last two decades of the 19th century (the Crimean Tatar population rose spectacularly from 100,000 in 1861 to 196,854 by the 1890s), it can be surmised that this emigration, like that of 1874, was limited to a few thousand.[54] Vol'fson places the number of emigrants leaving the Crimea in the migrations of the 1870s and 1890s at 18,000 and this is should perhaps be taken as the highest possible number for this period.[55]

Crimean Tatars continued to migrate to the Ottoman Empire in a trickle as the century turned, usually to join family members or as a result of land confiscation, but this migration came to a halt in 1902 largely as a result of the intellectual movement begun by the influential Tatar reformer, Ismail Bey Gasprinsky. The emigration

[51] This source claims that the male Tatar population of the Crimea in 1874 was 60,000, which is remarkable considering there were only 100,000 Tatars in the Crimea in 1861. This high number is perhaps a result of the Crimean Muslims' traditional high birth rate and the return of some Tatars from the Ottoman Empire. Ibid.
[52] Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 25. p. 354.
[53] Mart'ianov. op. cit. no. 48. p. 708.
[54] Richard Pipes. *The Formation of the Soviet Union*. Harvard Univ. Press. Cambridge; Mass. 1956. p. 12.
[55] Vol'fson. op. cit. no. 32. p. 195.

movement picked up pace for a short period again during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 (commemorated in the popular Tatar song 'Port Arthur' which recalls the death of Tatar soldiers in this distant conflict) but it never again reached the level of the destructive migration of 1860-61. By the time of the Russo-Japanese War, the Crimean Tatar community had stabilized and many had begun to consider the Crimea, and not the Ottoman Empire, to be their homeland even though it was a part of the Russian Empire. As the century progressed, it was the newly constructed Crimean homeland that was to become the focus of a powerful national movement which later acted as a magnet for this people in their scattered places of Stalin-imposed exile.

Herein lies the tragic irony behind the mass Tatar migrations to the religiously-defined, Ottoman homeland during the 18th and 19th centuries. For over a century the ancestors of today's strongly nationalistic, territorialized Crimean Tatars abandoned the very land so cherished by their modern day descendants as a *milli vatan* (national homeland) in order to live in a new homeland that was often defined in traditional religious terms as the *ak-toprak* (white soil), the *Devlet-i Aliye* (the Exalted Realm) or the *Dar al-Islam*. The idea of migration to an imagined *religious* homeland, that most Tatars had never seen, seems to have been as integral a part of 19th century Crimean Muslim culture as the idea of migration to a nationally defined *secular* homeland is to their nationalist descendants who grew up in exile imagining the Crimea as their imagined home place.

Over and over again the Muslims of the 19th century Crimea sold their possessions for a pittance and migrated to the 'white land', a homeland that existed only in this people's communal imagination. Later Crimean Tatar nationalists, such as Cafer Seydahmet and Numan Çelebi Cihan, were to be pained by the religiously-motivated aspect of their ancestors' abandonment of a land that the nationalists had come to view as their people's national fatherland (although they blamed the Russian landowners for being the main catalysts for emigration).[56] Crimean Tatar activist Mubeyyin Batu Altan wistfully summed up this sorrow exclaiming "Emigration was indeed the 'curse' of the Crimean Tatars; it cost them their

[56] Djafer Seidamet. *La Crimee. Passe-Present. Revendications des Tatars de Crimee.* Lausanne; Impreimerie G. Vaney-Burnier. 1921. pp. 46-49.

homeland...It makes one wonder what their status would have been if the Crimean Tatars had not abandoned their homeland and were able to fight against their oppressors."[57]

The contemporary descendants of the Crimean Muslims have constructed a *national* homeland in purely secular terms. These strongly nationalist Crimean Tatars have, since 1989, begun to partake in a new sort of mass migration to a land that existed for almost half a century of exile only in this nation's collective imagination. These 'returnees' to the Crimea have, like their ancestors before them, sold their houses and belongings and have migrated to a homeland in a mass movement that is not fully understood by their neighbors in Uzbekistan and elsewhere.[58]

When asked why they are selling off their belongings and dwellings, leaving successful jobs and migrating to the Crimea the post-Soviet Crimean Tatars of today give answers similar to those given over a century earlier to General Totleben when he sought to understand the reasons for the strange emigration of the Crimea's Muslim population in 1860. The answer given by a poor Crimean Tatar as to why he migrated to the Crimea in 1994 is as compelling in its simple logic as the answers given to Totleben over a century earlier by emigrating Tatars. When asked why he left Central Asia, a Crimean Tatar migrant answered "I disposed of everything in Tashkent (the capital of Uzbekistan); my apartment, job and car...Our elders advised us and we agreed: it was necessary to go the Crimea, to the land of our ancestors. And here we are, we've arrived."[59]

In the Crimea, the author interviewed scores of Crimean Tatars who had sacrificed lucrative jobs, apartments, houses, security, and friends to partake in a mass migration to an imagined land described to them in scores of stories as the 'Green Isle.' For these migrants, participating in the return migration to the Crimea meant partaking in an event of tremendous historical significance. These exiles were doing nothing less than reversing centuries of out-migra-

[57] Mubeyyin Batu Altan. "Emigration." *Crimean Tatar Home Page.* at: http://www.euronet.nl/users/sota/krimtatar.html (this site is an excellent source for those wishing an introduction to Crimean Tatar history and culture.)

[58] In my interviews with Uzbeks in Central Asian several claimed they did not know their neighbors were Crimean Tatars until they suddenly up and left in the early 1990s for the Crimea.

[59] Viktor Perushkin. "Uplyvet li Krym v Turtsiiu?" *Argumenty i Fakty.* October 1994. no. 40 (729). p. 6.

tion from the Crimea by the Crimean Tatars and repopulating their nation's homeland with its *'korennoi narod'* (native people). In symbolic terms these repatriates are now replanting Tatar roots in the soil of their ancestors. In demographic terms, these late 20th century migrants are reestablishing a Tatar nation in the Crimean homeland and "re-Tatarizing" their native land.

The Crimean Tatar Migrations in Historical Perspective

Seen from this wider perspective, the Crimean Tatar emigrations of the 18th and 19th centuries which saw the 'de-Tatarization' of the Crimea were largely the result of state-sponsored capitalist expansion in the Crimean Peninsula and adjacent steppes at the expense of a weaker, pre-modern, agrarian community. This gradual process of displacement was not an example of vicious, ethnically-based cleansing of the sort recently seen in the Balkans and Transcaucasus. While Crimean Tatar sources from the diaspora often use the term *temizlemek* (to cleanse) when referring to the migrations of their ancestors to the Ottoman Empire, these migrations cannot be clearly defined as a state-sponsored effort to 'de-Tatarize' the Crimea. As far as the Tatar migrations are concerned, Justin McCarthy points out "The Russians seldom actually put bayonets to their backs and forced them out" as the Russian army did in fact do to the peoples of the northern Caucasus.[60]

Although there was an obvious sense of distrust between the conquered and ruling communities in the Crimea (which was most glaringly manifested in time of war), there was, in general, an absence of ethnic hatred among these two peoples in the 19th century context. During this period there were, for example, no anti-Russian calls for *jihad* among the Crimean Muslims (who were the majority in the Crimea until after the Crimean War, albeit an unarmed majority). For their part, the Russian colonial administration appears to have respected Catherine's wish that the Crimean Tatars be granted a modicum of protection and, throughout the Russian Imperial period, the civil authorities resisted the temptation to expel the distrusted indigenous Muslim group from the Crimea (the solution chosen to

[60] Justin McCarthy. *Death and Exile. The Cleansing of the Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922*. Princeton; Darwin Press. 1995. p. 18.

free up land inhabited by the native Indian population in the United States of America during the 'Trail of Tears' and countless other 19th century 'removals').

The situation in the Russian Crimea was, in many ways, similar to other European colonial provinces during the 19th century and the main tensions in the province resulted from the dominant people's expansion at the expense of the weaker indigenous community. As in other colonial contexts, the indigenous Crimean Tatar population felt its traditional sense of identity and community threatened by the intrusion of outsiders. As the Russian colonial regime continued to displace the Crimea's indigenous population and to deprive it of land, emigration to a more familiar Islamic milieu, where the opportunities for preserving traditional identities and flourishing in economic terms (theoretically) existed, became an increasingly attractive solution. The choice of emigrating to the Islamic Ottoman Empire was quite natural in the 19th century Crimean Muslim context.

It was only after the freeing of Russian serfs in 1861, when the dominant Russians themselves began to develop a mass-based sense of Russian (as opposed to Orthodox Christian) national identity, that the Crimean Muslims were themselves to react by beginning the long process of redefining themselves on the basis of their shared language and ethnicity. By the early 20th century a reactionary, defensive national identity had begun to form among a new generation of Crimean Tatar intellectuals, partly in response to the rise of Russian nationalism and Pan-Slavism. It was this social transformation, as much as any political or economic changes in the Russian province of the Tauride, that was to eventually bring to a halt almost a century and half of devastating out-migration to the Ottoman Empire by the Crimea's Muslim-Tatar community. As the Crimean Tatars began to identify themselves on the basis of their shared ethno-linguistic characteristics and to define their community in the terms of European romantic nationalism, they began to develop a completely different concept of communal links to territory and community. The new concepts of homeland and collective identity fervently espoused by a new generation of nationalist-reformers were to be expressed in largely secular terms rather than the religious terms of land and territory articulated in the Qur'an and the *hadiths* (collection of precedents set by the Prophet Mohammed).

In these circumstances, the diminished community of Crimean

Tatars that remained in the Crimea after the storm of emigration in 1860-61 was to experience a crisis of identity and to eventually begin the process of questioning its traditionalist Islamic leadership. This quest was to lead to a growing movement among a new generation of young reformers who sought to understand the underlying causes for their community's collapse in the 19th century. It is not surprising that this group, which was increasingly exposed to Western cultural influences via the modernizing Russians and Turks, began to think of reforming its own ossified, religious community within the Crimea. It was, in turn, only natural that these modernists also began to challenge those they felt had been most responsible for their community's decline and for the emigrations that had deprived the Tatar community of so much of its strength and vitality.

Many young reformists and modernists felt that the blame for these migrations and the stagnation of their group's society lay squarely on the shoulders of the guardians of the old order, the conservative *mullahs*. From these beginnings rose the popular anti-traditionalist reform movement that was to spread throughout the Muslim lands of the Tsar and eventually to lead to the rise of one of the Russian Empire's first Muslim national movements.

The future of tens of thousands of Crimean *muhacirs* who had already migrated to the Sultan's lands was not, however, to lie in this newly imagined Crimean Tatar *vatan* (homeland), but across the Black Sea in the lands of the Ottoman Empire. The majority of the Tatar population originating in the Crimea was now to find itself living in the Ottoman Empire during this period which became known by 20th century Crimean Tatar nationalists as the *ilk sürgün* (the first exile). The homeland for these early emigrants was now to be found in Anatolia, the Caucasus or, more importantly, in the Ottoman coastal province south of Danube River, known as the Dobruca (located in modern Bulgaria and Romania). In the lands of the Dobruca the Tatar migrants settled in such towns as Mecidiye, Babadağ, Köstence (Constanta), Tulçea, Silistre, Beştepe, Varna or in villages named for their abandoned homelands to the north, such as Shirin, Yaila, Ak Mecit, Yalta, Kefe or Beybuçak.

The process that led to the creation of the Tatar diaspora communities of the Ottoman Empire provides the historian with an opportunity to study one of the most unusual (and largely ignored) accounts of displacement, migration and diaspora in East European history. The history of the Tatar diaspora communities of the Dobruca and Anatolia was to unfold in vastly different directions from that of the small Crimean Tatar community remaining in the Russian Empire. The fate of the Tatars of the Balkans and Anatolia was to be henceforth linked to that of the Ottoman Empire which, by 1877, found itself on the verge of crumbling beneath the twin blows of a Russian invasion and the uprisings of national liberal movements among the Tatar settlers' new neighbors, the Christian Bulgarians and Romanians.

Like other Muslim minorities of the Balkans and Anatolia that identified themselves in traditional Islamic terms, the collapse of over 400 years of Ottoman Muslim rule in Eastern Europe was to have a direct impact upon the Ottoman Tatars and lead to vast social transformations among this conservative community of *muhacirs*. For many Crimean Tatars who had fled to the Ottoman Empire, this refuge on the 'white soil' of the Sultan-Caliph was to be all too fleeting as the tragic events in 1876-78 were to clearly demonstrate.

CHAPTER SEVEN

AK TOPRAK. THE FORMATION OF THE CRIMEAN TATAR COMMUNITIES OF THE CAUCASUS, BULGARIA AND ROMANIA

In comparison to earlier chapters in Crimean Tatar history, there is little real controversy surrounding the nature of the Crimean Tatar immigration to the Ottoman Empire during the 18th and 19th centuries. There are, however, slightly differing interpretations of the Crimean Tatar settlement of the Ottoman provinces of Rumelia (predominately Dobruca), the Caucasus and Anatolia in the Tatar and Russian-Soviet sources. Historical accounts from the lands of the Ottoman diaspora tend to stress the hospitable reception the Tatar *'kovulanlar'* or *'sürgünler'* ('expellees' or 'exiles') received in the welcoming *ak toprak* 'white soil' of the Islamic Ottoman Empire. Soviet and certain Russian sources on the other hand frequently take a certain satisfaction in recording the lack of hospitality the 'fanatical' emigrants received after leaving the benevolent rule of Russia to settle in the land of the Tsar's enemy, the Ottoman Sultan.

From the Turkish-Tatar diaspora comes Ahmet Eren's account which claims "Every Rumelian and Anatolian city, town and village helped in the assistance campaign" for arriving Tatars.[1] According to this source the Ottoman authorities spared no effort in assisting their fellow Muslims in settling in the sultan's domains. Iskender Akchura claims "Fraternal Turkey was a model of hospitality for the emigrants. It was also a source of moral support, a source of cultural and educational activity, an example of political sovereignty and independence in the face of raging and militant imperialism of Russia."[2]

Markevich presents a contrasting picture that is typical of Russian sources which often expressed pity for the reception that the

[1] Ahmet Eren. *Türkiye'de Göç ve Göçmen Meseleleri Tanzimat Devri.* Istanbul; Nurgök Matbaasi. 1966. pp. 68-69.

[2] Iskender Akchura. *Genocide Behind the Iron Curtain. A Short History of Repressions by the Soviet Government Aimed at the Extermination of Pious Moslems of the Crimea.* New York; Raussen Bros. 1963. p. 26.

'misled' or 'deluded' Crimean Tatar peasants encountered in their cold new homeland. According to Markevich:

> The emigrants did not, however, find in Turkey that which they sought and dreamed of. With weeping they parted from their homeland and family graves, taking soil to remind them of it, over there they found not greetings, kindness or sympathy, but cold indifference and scorn, not help but extortion and oppression, not blossoming fruitful land but stony, uninhabited marshy places, demanding considerable labor...and even the climate was unfavorable.[3]

The truth is rather more complex than either of these simplistic accounts would indicate and the Crimean Tatar migrants found differing receptions in the Sultan's lands depending on the historical and geographic circumstances surrounding their arrival in the Ottoman Empire. This chapter in the Crimean Tatars' history is, however, one of the murkiest for the Ottoman sources are not as accurate, or as numerous, as the Russian first-hand observations or statistical reports from the period. In addition, ethnicity mattered very little to the Ottomans who considered the Tatars, Circassians, Bosniaks, Chechens and others who arrived in the Empire's core to simply be fellow Muslims. Little effort was thus made to record the ethnic background of arriving *muhacirs* or to analyze their particular circumstances.

In reconstructing these migrations we can, however, glean from the sources a general picture of the Tatar settlement in the Ottoman Empire which took place from the outbreak of the 1768-1774 Russo-Turkish War to the early 20th century. In geographical terms the Crimean Tatars migrated to the Ottoman Empire in three directions, each with its own particular history, geography and culture. The zones of Tatar settlement were, from East to West, the neighboring Caucasus region (predominately Circassia and the Ottoman-dominated Taman Peninsula); the Buçak, Dobruca and greater Rumelia; and the heartland of the Ottoman Empire, Anatolia.

The Exiled Giray Dynasty in the Caucasus and the Buçak

Considering the proximity of the Caucasus to the Crimean Peninsula (the Taman Peninsula on the Caucasian side can be seen across

[3] Arsenii Markevich. "Pereselenie Krymskikh Tatar v Turtsiiu." *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk.* 1928. p. 404.

the straits of Azov from Kerch in the eastern Crimea) and this area's long history of relations with the Crimean Khanate, it is not surprising that many Crimean Muslims chose to emigrate to this land in the years following the Russian conquest of the Crimea. The Crimean Khans had long claimed suzerainty over several Circassian tribes inhabiting the coasts and mountains of the nearby Caucasus and the Tatars had played a key role in this turbulent land's history since the period of the Golden Horde. In analyzing Crimean Tatar relations to the Circassians it should, for example, be mentioned that: it was Crimean Tatar missionaries who converted the Circassians to Islam; Circassian mercenaries and recruits had for centuries played a key role in the khan's armies; many Crimean khans married Circassian women, who were famous for their beauty; and most Crimean princes spent their early years in the Caucasus, where they were trained by *atabegs* (lit. 'prince fathers', i.e. protector-advisers) from the Beslen tribe of Circassians in the art of warfare.[4] The Crimean Tatars who emigrated to the Caucasus were thus entering a country that would have been familiar to many who had traveled here or who had come into contact with those from this land.

During the period of Russia' protectorate over the Crimean Khanate (1774-1783), Circassia and the Taman Peninsula served as a staging ground for exiled, pro-Ottoman segments of the Crimean aristocracy who sought to overthrow the pro-Russian ruler, Şahin Giray Khan. Several invasions of the Russian-dominated Crimea and two successful *coups* against Şahin Giray were launched from this region, which was dominated by members of the Giray aristocracy, adventurous frontier *pashas* (Ottoman governors), and Circassian war leaders who had no love for the Russians.[5]

With the final annexation of the Crimea in 1783, 8,000 *"mullahs* and *mirzas"* migrated across to the Taman Peninsula (controlled from the Ottoman fortress of Anapa until 1829) and into Circassian lands proper.[6] According to Paul Henze, this wave of immigrants integrated rather easily into Circassian society where they enjoyed great respect

[4] For a description of this training see. Halil Inalcik et. al. ed. *Dimitri Cantemir. Historian of South Eastern Europe and Oriental Civilization.* Bucharest; Association Internationale d'Etudes Sud-Est European. 1973. p. 48. A. Namitok. "The 'Voluntary' Adherence of Kabarda (Eastern Circassia) to Russia." *Caucasian Review.* no. 2. 1956. p. 20.

[5] H.D. Seymour. *Russia on the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.* London; John Murray. 1885. p. 55.

[6] Markevich. op. cit. no. 3. p. 388.

for their anti-Russian record.[7] In the initial migrations to this region between 1771 and 1792, thousands of Tatars poured into the Caucasus from the Crimean Peninsula. In addition, with General Suvorov's brutal slaughter of several thousand Kuban Nogais in 1783, an "irreconcilable minority" from this nomadic element settled among the Circassians.[8] The Ottoman frontier commander, Ferah Ali Pasha, may have resettled as many as 40,000 Nogai Tatars in Ottoman territories on the peninsula of Taman or in Circassia itself at this time.[9]

From Circassia, Kuban Nogais and exiled members of the Crimean aristocracy (*mirzas*, religious officials from the Crimea with ties to Istanbul and especially members of the Giray dynasty) continued to foment anti-Russian movements among the peoples of the Northern Caucasus and to dream of reclaiming their homeland from the Russians. During the Russo-Ottoman War of 1787-1792, fought to liberate the Crimea, an heir to the Crimea throne, Kalgay Giray, was for example appointed commander of the Kuban front against Russia.[10] As descendants of Chingis Khan, it would seem that the royal name of the Girays still commanded respect among the peoples of the Caucasus. Writing in 1826, an English traveler to the lands of the Kabardian Circassians wrote of the dynastic name Giray "This name is still a proud badge of distinction in many families in the Kabardian country" and the name Giray is still found among the Circassians of Russia today.[11] During his journey to Circassia in the 1830s, the English traveler Edmund Spencer recalled being entertained by a Tatar bard with the royal name Kaplan Giray who sang of the exploits of the anti-Russian mountain warrior, Sheikh Mansur.[12]

The Nogais who settled among the Circassians appear to have been accorded a similar amount of respect from the Caucasian highland-

[7] Paul Henze. "Circassia in the Nineteenth Century. The Futile Fight for Freedom." *Turco-Tatar Past, Soviet Present.* Paris; Editions Peeters. 1986. p. 268.

[8] John Baddley. *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus.* London; Longman Greens and Co. 1908. p. 45.

[9] Bedri Habiçoğlu. *Kafkasyadan Anadoluya Göçler.* Istanbul; Nart Yayıncılık. 1993. p. 45.

[10] Stanford Shaw. *Between the Old and New. The Ottoman Empire Under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807.* Cambridge; Harvard Univ. Press. 1971. p. 35.

[11] Ebenezer Henderson. *Biblical Research and Travels in Russia.* London; James Nisbet. 1826. p. 299.

[12] Edmund Spencer. *Travels in Circassia, Krim Tatary etc.* London; Henry Colburn. 1839. p. 290.

ers who would have surely identified with the Nogais. The privileged position of the Nogais in Circassian society can be seen from the fact that the Circassian leader chosen to represent his people in the sultan's court during the 1830s was married to a Nogai princess.[13]

Communication seems to have been kept up in the early 19th century between the members of the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Circassia and those who remained in their homeland under Russian rule. A traveler to Circassia in the late 1820s, for example, mentioned an encounter with a group of Tatars from the Crimea who had traveled to the region to visit relatives who had settled in a Caucasian valley following the Russian conquest of the Crimea.[14]

This sort of intercourse was not always encouraged by the Russian authorities. During the 1820s, Russian officials in the Crimea were alarmed to hear that a messianic rumor was circulating among the oppressed Tatar peasants in the Crimea which claimed that a Giray Khan from the Caucasus was returning to the Crimea to free the land from infidel rule.[15] According to Russian sources, there were still restless elements in Crimean Tatar society who were in active correspondence with Giray elements in the Caucasus 40 years after the Crimea's annexation by Russia.[16]

As with diaspora communities throughout the world, many Crimean Tatars in the Caucasus (especially those with a claim to power) had a real interest in regaining their homeland. This dream died, however, when the Russians finally began the conquest of Circassia itself in 1859. With the fall of Circassia between 1860-1864, the vast majority of the Circassians departed from their lands for the Ottoman Empire and it can be assumed that the bulk of Tatars living in their midst emigrated at this time.

With the Russian annexation of the Crimean Khanate in 1783, many Crimean Tatars and a large contingent of Girays also migrated westward into Ottoman territories to the west of the Crimea around the Ottoman fortress Ozü (Russian Ochakov) in the southern Ukraine.[17] Many of these Tatars migrated westward into the Buçak

[13] Paul Henze. op cit. no. 7. p. 260.
[14] T.B. Armstrong. *Journal of Travels in the Seat of War During the Last Two Campaigns of Russia and Turkey*. London; A. Seguin. 1831. p. 64.
[15] Markevich. op. cit. no. 3. p. 392.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ottoman sources from that year report the arrival of as many as 4,000 Crimean Tatars fleeing the Russian advance at this frontier post with the Russian Empire. Alan Fisher. "Emigration of Muslims from the Russian Empire in the Years after the Crimean War." *Geschichte Ost Europas*. vol. 35. no. 3. 1987. p. 357.
[18] Halil Inalcik. "Giray". *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New Edition. vol. II. Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1965. p. 1114.
[19] Mark Pinson. "The Ottoman Colonization of the Crimean Tatars in Bulgaria, 1854-1862." *Turk Tarihi Kongresi*. vol. 2. 1973. p. 1040. Halil Inalcik. "Budjak" *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. vol. 1. Leiden; EJ Brill. 1960. p. 1287.
[20] Of these Tatars, who appear to have kept their martial traditions alive, this author claimed "The Tatars are much more civilized than the Turks and have manners and customs wholly different from theirs." Baron Pierce Balthazar von Campenhausen. *Travels Through Several Provinces of the Russian Empire*. London; Richard Phillips. 1808. p. 77.

where, in 1787, the Ottomans established a Giray vassal dynasty. This frontier state was initially ruled by Shahbaz Giray who was succeeded by Baht Giray. The latter ruler led the Tatars of the Buçak against the Russians in the Russo-Ottoman war of 1787-1792.[18] Members of the Giray dynasty thus led Tatars against the Russians on both the Kuban front and the Buçak front during this last Russo-Turkish war fought to liberate the Crimea.

The Giray vassal state of the Buçak was centered on the towns of Bender and Çatal Osman and was considered semi-independent, with its own *kadis* (judges) and rules, and was subordinated to the Ottoman *pasha* of Rushchuk.[19] This area had long been settled by Tatars and the Turkish traveler Evliya Chelebi reported the existence of 200 wealthy Tatar villages in the region. Prior to 1783 these were ruled over by the *Nur al-Din* (second heir to the Crimean throne) who resided in the village of Khan Kishlasi south of Bender. Baron Pierce Balthazar von Campenhausen later visited the khan in his headquarters in Bender just prior to this region's annexation by Russian in 1812 and left an interesting account of this precarious last holdout of the independent Tatars on Russia's frontier. This visitor found the Tatars of the Buçak amusing themselves with archery, horse racing, and lance throwing and claimed that the Khan,who entertained him with *kumis* (fermented horse milk), could still field an army of 6,000 mounted riders.[20] It can be assumed that the majority of the Tatars of the short-lived Giray vassal state of the Buçak were of Nogai origin, although the aristocracy would have been of south Crimean origin.

In the face of Russia's relentless advance following the annexation of the Buçak in 1812, the ruling Giray clan, its entourage and almost the entire Buçak Nogai Horde retreated southward across the

Danube River and onto the plains of the Ottoman Dobruca. Here they found many ancient Nogai villages awaiting them.

The History of Turkic Settlement in the Dobruca

In migrating south of the Danube into the plain of Dobruca (which is in many ways a continuation of the Black Sea steppe) the Crimean Tatars of the Buçak were following an ancient nomadic migration route. Since the time of the first Eurasian nomads, the Indo-Aryan Scythians and Sarmatians, the steppe nomads had dominated the plains of the Dobruca which are now largely claimed by Romania, with a small sliver of Dobrucan land in the south belonging to Bulgaria. In the time of the ancient Greek writer Herodotus, Dobruca was known as 'Scythia Minor' and the *kurgans* (burial mounds) of Scythian kings that dot this plain remind the traveler that the history of this land has long been more closely linked to the nomadic tribes of the north than to the lands of the neighboring Bulgars and Romanians.

The Dobruca, a quadrangle of land bounded on the north by the Danube estuary, on the East by the Black Sea, on the south by the forests of Deli Orman and on the west by the Danube River (which turns and flows south to north in this area cutting this plain off from Romania). In the north, around the village of Baba Dağ, the Dobruca is hilly. The majority of the Dobruca, however, is made up of a fertile steppe and on the coast there are marshes around lakes Sinoe and Razelm and hilly beaches around the ports of Constanta (Kustendje) and Varna on the southern Dobruca's limit. A 19th century traveler to this little visited land on the fringes of Europe wrote "It is a vast undulating plain, and at the time I am writing of was nearly all grass. There are not ten trees from end to end of it; and the only thing to mark the way and relieve the monotony are innumerable Roman barrows."[21] There were, according to this source, still herds of wild steppe horses roaming this plain as late as the 1870s.

In many ways this land was distinct from the neighboring Christian lands of Bulgaria and Romania proper in both cultural and

[21] John Barkley. *Between the Danube and the Black Sea (Or Five Years in Bulgaria).* London; John Murray. 1876. p. 19.

geographic terms. For centuries the Turkic tribes of the steppe had dominated this land which supported their herds and nomadic way of life and used it as a springboard for raiding the lands of Byzantines and for striking into the heartland of Eastern Europe. The first Turkic people to arrive in the Dobruca, the largely Turkic Huns (AD 408) were followed by the Turco-Mongol Avars (534), Bulgars (679), Pechenegs (1048) and Uz (1064).[22] In ethno-cultural terms it was, however, the Turkic Kipchak tribes who, from 1064, dominated this land.[23]

The Kipchak element in the Dobruca increased following the Mongol conquest of the Desht-i Kipchak plains to the north-east of the Dobruca as thousands of these Turkic nomads fled the invincible Mongol army of Batu Khan. By the mid 1200s the Golden Horde had extended its sway over the Kipchak Dobruca and, as in the Pontic steppes proper, the Mongol elite quickly became Turkified and Islamicized in the Dobruca and came to be known as Tatars.

Islam was spread among the Kipchak-Tatar nomads of the Dobruca when a Turkish Bektashi mystic from Bukhara, the blessed Sari Saltuk, arrived in this territory in 1261 with approximately 40 clans of Yöruk Turcoman (nomadic Oghuz tribesmen from western Anatolia).[24] In the legends of the Dobruca, Sari Saltuk flew across the sea to the Crimea spreading his syncretistic version of Islam which combined Christian and pagan beliefs with Sufi Islam.[25]

After his death, Sari Saltuk was considered a saint by the half pagan

[22] Paul Wittek. "Yazijioghlu 'Ali on the Christian Turks of Dobrudja." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.* XIV. 3. 1952. pp. 639-688.

[23] Halil Inalcik claims "the Kipchaks appeared to play politically and ethnically the most important part in the history of the Dobrudja until the advent of the Ottoman Turks." Halil Inalcik. "Dobrudja". *The Encyclopaedia of Islam.* ed. Bernard Lewis et. al. Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1965. pp. 611-612.

[24] Halil Inalcik. *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age, 1300-1600.* London; Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1973. p. 187. See also Jean Deny. "Sari Saltuq et le nom de la Ville de Babadaghi." *Melanges Emile Picot.* vol. 2. Paris; 1913. p. 11. It is interesting to note that when the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid Yildirim conquered the Dobruca he found descendants of these earlier Seljuk migrants still living in the Dobruca. Michael Kiel. *Studies on the Ottoman Architecture of the Balkans.* "The Türbe of Sari Saltak at Babadag-Dobrudja." London; Variorum. 1990. p. 280.

[25] Brian Williams. "Mystics, Nomads and Heretics. The Diffusion of Muslim Syncretism from Central Asia to the 13th Century Turco-Byzantine Dobruca." *International Journal of Turkish Studies.* vol. 7 no. 1-2. 2001. See also Irene Melikoff. "Qui Était Sari Saltuk? Quelques Remarques sur le Manuscrits du Saltukname." *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of V.L. Menage.* ed. Colin Heywood and Colin Imber. Istanbul; Isis Press. 1994. pp. 231-238.

half Muslim nomads of the region and his *mezar* (tomb complex) at the foot of a holy mountain in the village of Baba Dağ (Father Mountain) in northern Dobruca became a sacred site of pilgrimage for local Turks and Tatars right up until the 20th century. Sari Saltuk's *tekke* (dervish hostel) at Baba Dağ may have been built by Khan Mengli Giray in honor of this saint-dervish whose legendary activities included many miracles in the lands of the Crimean Tatars. According to the legends Sari Saltuk fought with the Crimean Tatars against the unbelievers, converted both the Tatars of the steppes and Genoese Christians in Kaffa to Islam and established a dervish convent in the south Crimean valley of Sudak.[26]

In the years following Sari Saltuk's death in 1300, Anatolian Turcoman clans continued to rule the Dobruca, including a Turkic leader with the Slavic name Dobrotic, for whom the land was eventually named. He was a descendent of a failed contender for the Seljuk throne, Sultan Izz ed-Din Kaykaus, who ended his years in exile in the Crimean port of Sudak, previously a Seljuk possession, as an honored guest of the khans of the Golden Horde.[27]

Following the Central Asian warlord Timur's devastating attack on the Golden Horde in the late 14th century many Tatars from the Desht-i Kipchak migrated to the Dobruca which acted as a meeting place for the two great races of Oghuz Turks and Kipchak Turkic tribes. With the expansion of Ottoman power in the Balkans and their conquest of the Dobruca in 1393, this borderland saw further settlement of Turks from Anatolia and Tatars from the steppes.[28] Sultans Bayazid 'Yildirim' (The Thunderbolt), 1389-1402, and Mehmed I, 1413-1421, colonized the plains of Dobruca with Nogai Tatars from the Buçak and rebellious Turcoman tribes from Eastern Anatolia who brought their syncrestic version of Islam with them.[29]

[26] Fahir Iz. *Ebul-Hayr Rumi'nin Sözlu Rivayetlerden Topladiği Sari Saltuk Meakibi.* Cambridge; Harvard University Press. 1974-84. (7 volumes). For Sari Saltuk's missionary work in the Crimea see. vol. 2. p. 191 and vol. 4. pp. 654-656. Bernard Lewis. "Babadaghi." *Encyclopaedia of Islam.* Leiden; EJ Brill. vol. 1. p. 843.

[27] Halil Inalcik. op. cit. no. 23. pp. 611-612. Auriel Decei. "Le Probleme de la Colonisation des Turcs Seljoukides dans la Dobrogea au XIIIe Siecle." *Tarih Araştimalari Dergisi.* 1968. vol. 6. p. 88.

[28] It should also be mentioned that both Sultans Bayazid I and Suleiman the Magnificent visited the shrine of Sari Saltuk and embellished it during their rules.

[29] Fredrick de Jong. "The Turks and Tatars of Romania." *Turcica. Revue d'Etudes Turques.* vol. 18. 1986. p. 167.

In his article on the Turks and Tatars in Dobruca, Fredrick de Jong also mentions the settlement of Tatars from the Crimea and the Buçak between 1593 and 1595.[30] A Romanian account claims that the Tatar settlement of the Dobruca in the early 16th century was largely concentrated in the areas just south of the Danube estuary.[31] During this period, the Dobruca was an integral part of the Turco-Islamic world and Inalcik claims that this area was "a centre where Turcoman tribes, *gazis* and heretical dervishes thrived and where uprisings were most frequent."[32]

The Role of the Crimean Tatars in Dobruca After 1783

The pace of Tatar migration to the Dobruca (Dobrogea in Romanian, Dobrudzha in Bulgarian) accelerated with the fall of Tatar power in the Crimea and steppes of the southern Ukraine in 1783. Tens of thousands of Nogais, and a smaller number of Tat and Yaliboyu Tatars, settled in the plains of the Ottoman-ruled Dobruca from 1783 to the advent of the Crimean War.[33] The Tatar settlements of this region became so dense that the Dobruca was known throughout the Balkans as *Küçük Tatarstan* (Little Tatary).[34] These early Tatar settlers of the Dobruca were known as the *Kabail* (Arabic, 'tribe') Tatars to differentiate them from the mass wave of Tatar emigrants who arrived in the Dobruca following the Crimean War.[35]

With the Russian annexation of the Buçak in 1812, the Nogais from this steppe area became the dominant element in the Dobruca. A contemporary described the similarities between this land and

[30] Ibid.

[31] L. P. Marcu. "The Tatar Patriarchal Community in the Dobrudja and its Disintegration." *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Europeennnes.* vol. v. 1967. no. 3-4. p. 508.

[32] Halil Inalcik. op. cit. no. 23. p. 188.

[33] While many Tatars went to settle in the area of Ruschuk (Ruse) in Bulgaria proper (from which they hoped to one day "regain their homeland"), a Tatar source claims that the Crimean Tatars established 300 villages in the Dobruca after 1783. Plamen Tzvetkov. *A History of the Balkans.* vol. 1. San Fransico. EM Text. 1993. p. 361. "Dobrucadaki Kirim Türkleri." *Emel.* July-August 1963. p. 9.

[34] For an introduction to Turco-Tatar monuments in this region see. H. Stanescu. "Monuments d'art Turc en Dobrudja." *Studia Acta Orientalia.* no. 3. 1961. pp. 177-197.

[35] According to the early 20th century Balkan anthropologist, Eugene Pittard, the term *Kabail* was primarily used to refer to the Nogais who settled in the region from the Buçak. Eugene Pittard. *Les Peuples de Balkans. Reserches Anthropologiques.* Paris; Editions Leroux. 1920. p. 305.

the Nogais' former homeland writing "The region itself presents a wide steppe, extending in the distance on all sides to the limits of the horizon, and this reminds the inhabitants of the Crimean steppes. For those from Perekop and Buçak this is a beloved new homeland."[36]

The Tatar inhabitants of the Dobruca continued their long tradition of loyal service to the Ottoman Sultan in this land that had for centuries been considered a second homeland to the Nogais of the steppe. In the Dobruca itself, the Tatars, together with the Albanians, served as *zaptiyes* (gendarmes) and were held in great esteem for their honesty. The Tatars also served as sentries and guards in the Dobruca and, in return for this duty, received tax privileges.[37] The Dobrucan Tatars also received a certain degree of autonomy from their grateful Ottoman rulers and were governed by one of their own who served as *kaimakam* (governor) and whose title, Khan Mirza, would seem to indicate Giray origins.[38] The Giray clan, which multiplied in the Dobruca, appears to have maintained its respected position in this land and a contemporary records "knowing that they are no less than their ancestors, they sit on the throne of the Crimean Khans when granting audiences to guests."[39]

The Buçak Tatars who settled in the Dobruca also appear to have maintained their fine nomadic equestrian skills and supplied the Sultan with some of his finest cavalrymen.[40] When the reformist Sultan, Selim III, sought to create a modern cavalry unit for his *Niazam-i Cedid* (New Order) Army, he selected the Dobruca Tatars from the Buçak to fill this squadron's elite ranks. This cavalry unit, known as the Kabail Tatar Squadron, served with distinction throughout the Ottoman Empire and earned a reputation for loyalty to the Sultan. According to a 19th century Ottoman *pasha* "The squadron of regular cavalry was distinguished at that time everywhere."[41]

The Dobrucan Tatar squadron also played a key role in Sultan Mahmut II's life and death struggle against his rebellious vassal,

[36] "Tatary i Cherkesy v Turtsii" *Slavianskii Sbornik*. vol. 3. 1877. p. 49.
[37] Kemal Karpat. "Ottoman Urbanism: The Crimean Emigration to Dobruca and the Founding of Mecidiye, 1856-1878". *International Journal of Turkish Studies*. Winter 1984-1985. vol. 3. no. 1. p. 5.
[38] Ibid.
[39] "Tatary i Cherkesy v Turtsii" op. cit. no. 36. p. 50.
[40] Ibid. p. 47.
[41] Ibid.

Mehemed Ali the Vicreroy of Egypt and his son Ibrahim. In the disastrous battle of Nezib, June 24, 1839, the Tatar squadron (which served in the European-style *Mansure*, i.e. 'Victory' cavalry division) saved the remnants of the Sultan's army, which were being pursued by Ibrahim's forces, from complete destruction. This unit also saw action in the suppression of uprisings in Bosnia-Hercegovina, Kurdistan, the Arab provinces and, according to Karpat, the Tatar squadron served as far afield as the Hijaz (western coast of Arabia), over 1,000 miles from their homeland on the Black Sea.[42] During these wars fought to defend the Empire, this source points out that the loyal Tatar squadron "suffered heavy losses and its members were exhausted; consequently, it was agreed in 1841 that they should be allowed to return to Babadağı to rest and refill their depleted ranks from among the community as was their custom."[43] It should also be mentioned that the Tatar cavalry squadron served with the Ottomans during the Allied invasion of Crimea, although it was withdrawn from the front early in the war.[44] During the Crimean War, many Girays fought against the Russians, including Mengli Giray, Islam Giray-Kerim and Maksud Giray, with the latter receiving a medal of honor from the French for his service.[45]

One of the most interesting Tatars of Dobrucan origin is known to Turks as Kara Hussein, a former Janissary commander who was responsible for the destruction of the rapacious Janissary corps. This infantry corps had lost much of its military effectiveness by the 19th century and had become a conservative praetorian guard preventing reform in the Ottoman Empire. Kara Hussein carried out Sultan Mahmud's orders to surprise and destroy this famed warrior class in the Et Meydan (Meat Square) in Istanbul in 1826. The threat of the perpetually mutinous Janissary corps was forever ended in the ensuing slaughter which saw this ancient division hunted to extinction.[46] A grateful Sultan Mahmud accorded his loyal Tatar commander great honor and a governorship as a result of this service. A 19th century account states:

> To the Tatars belonged Hussein Agha Pasha, the true party responsible for the destruction of the Janissaries for Sultan Mahmud. Com-

[42] Kemal Karpat. op. cit. no. 37. p. 4.
[43] Ibid. p. 5.
[44] "Tatary i Cherkesy v Turtsii." op. cit. no. 36. p. 48.
[45] Ibid. p. 50.
[46] Ibid. pp. 54-55.

> ing from the city of Bender in Bessarabia, he migrated with the Buçak Tatars, entered the Janissary corps and became their commander. Subsequently he was designated governor general of Bulgaria and ruled here wisely and justly. To this day the Bulgarians remember him with respect. The Serbs are grateful for he rendered them great assistance on their path to autonomy and for the good relations he had with them.[47]

The success of Kara Hussein Pasha and countless other Tatars who served throughout the Ottoman Empire in various positions compared drastically with the status of the Crimean Tatar peasants who remained in the Russian Empire. Many of these left behind in the Crimea began to look longingly across the Black Sea to the lands of their fellow Muslims, the Ottomans, and to contemplate migration.

This aspiration initially paralleled the Ottomans' own objectives in the region. As the Christian peoples of the Ottoman lands in the Balkans became increasingly restive under the influence of national liberation movements in the 19th century, the Ottoman authorities were quick to welcome Turkic-Muslims from the Crimea to act as a counterweight to the Christian population. The Tatar settlement of the Dobruca, long considered a vitally important *üç* (military frontier) with Russia, was seen by the Ottoman Porte as particularly desirable. Tatars who settled this land were granted tax exemptions, land grants, and village autonomy under their traditional leaders from the Crimea and steppes to the north.

There was, however, a dark side to living on this exposed frontier which faced the constantly looming threat of Imperial Russia. The open plains of the Dobruca were seen by the Russians as the gateway to the heart of the Ottoman Balkans and, although this corridor region was guarded by the Ottoman Danube fortresses of Ismail, Braila and Kilia, the Russians were increasingly able to overrun these points and invade the exposed lands to the south. The Russian invasion of 1829, in particular, was ruinous for the Dobruca and caused a mass emigration of Tatars and Turks to the safety of Anatolia.[48] A Romanian source claims that after the war of 1828-1829, the Dobruca had been transformed into a 'desert' with a remaining population of only 40,000 inhabitants.[49]

In 1853, warfare once again coursed over the plains of the Dobruca as the Crimean War broke out and many Muslim villages of the region were torched by the Cossack units operating in the area. As the Russian invaders withdrew from the war-blackened Dobruca to concentrate on the defense of the Crimea, Allied troops belonging to the French, English and Ottomans moved into the region. Cesar Lecat, the Baron de Bazancourt, left the following eyewitness account of the destruction inflicted on the villages of this region by the armies of the Tsar:

> Farther on, here and there, villages burned and destroyed by the enemy. The places where houses stood are marked by heaps of stones; gardens, and roads alike disappear beneath a mass of vegetation; and the occasional wells are filled up, or infected by human bodies thrown into them, pell-mell with those of animals. The ravagers of this district were the Russians and the wild hordes newly arrived from Russia...Kostendje (Constanta), like all the Turkish towns of the Dobrudscha, is no longer anything but a mass of ruins; recent ruins, fragments still smoking, which the Cossacks left behind. Everything is overthrown, confused, ravaged and destroyed.[50]

The Post-Crimean War Migrations to the Dobruca

The Dobruca appears to have suffered considerable depopulation as a result of the 1853 Russian invasion and earlier Russian incursions and the sultan's officials were concerned about repopulating the region in the aftermath of the Crimean War. Many of the approximately 30,000 Crimean Tatars who emigrated from the Russian Empire during the course of the Crimean War were subsequently settled in this region by the Ottoman authorities. By the end of the Crimean War the number of Tatars in the Dobruca had risen again to somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000.[51] The Ottoman government appears to have exerted considerable effort and expense in providing relief for those who arrived in the Dobruca during the Crimean War. Housing, grain and tax relief were offered to the war-stricken immigrants from the Russian Empire. By 1860, however, the Dobruca's resources were being stretched and Ottoman officials feared that the news of the immigrants' welcome in the Ottoman

[47] Ibid.
[48] Inalcik. op. cit. no. 26. p. 613.
[49] Al. P. Arbore. *La Dobrudja*. Bucharest; Academie Roumaine. 1938. p. 649.

[50] Cesar Lecat. *The Crimean Expedition*. vol. I. London; Sampson Low and Son. 1866. pp. 143-144.
[51] Mark Pinson. op. cit. no. 19. p. 1044. Kemal Karpat. op. cit. no. 37. p. 13.

Empire would reach the Crimea and spark further migrations.[52] With the arrival of the first wave of Nogais migrating from the Caucasus in 1859-60, the Ottomans fears were soon realized.

The number of Tatars in the Dobruca was to rise dramatically as tens of thousands of stricken immigrants began arriving in the Dobruca's ports from the Crimea or via the Buçak land route. The Ottoman administration appears to have been largely unprepared for the vast scale of the migration and there is some debate as to whether the Porte actually desired the arrival of such a large number of largely destitute peasants.[53] The fact that the Ottoman government supplied 310 vessels for transporting the Tatars to the Ottoman Empire would, however, indicate that the Sultan had assumed some responsibility for this Muslim people's fate.[54] From start to finish, however, the transportation and settlement of the Tatars in the Dobruca was marred by poor planning and a lack of preparation on the part of the Ottoman authorities. Many immigrants lost their lives in this tragic *hijra* and those that survived frequently lost everything.

The psychological problems the destitute arrivals faced when leaving their home villages, families and friends in Russia were compounded by the unsafe traveling conditions, lack of sanitation in the places of landing and the mayhem related to their resettlement in the Ottoman Empire. Particularly perilous was the hazardous journey across the Black Sea in overcrowded Ottoman vessels commanded by Turkish captains more intent on making a profit than on ensuring safety. Many a fragile Turkish ship was sunk on the voyage across the notoriously stormy Black Sea and contemporary accounts claim that "every day the sea cast tens and hundreds of corpses on the shore."[55] Goldenberg writes "All coastal inhabitants of the Crimea, and in particular the quarantine administration, know that in the period of the emigration, *daily* the sea tossed up several corpses of migrants; but how many of them fell to the fish or drifted to the opposite shore, it is difficult to say. It is known to us that of all the

[52] Karpat. op. cit. no. 37. p. 15.

[53] See Mark Pinson "Russian Policy and the Emigration of the Crimean Tatars to the Ottoman Empire." *Güney Doğu Araştimalari Dergisi*. no. 2-3. 1973-4. p. 106, for a discussion of this issue.

[54] Ibid. pp. 106-107.

[55] B.M. Vol'fson. "Emigratsiia Krymskikh Tatar v 1860 g."*Istoricheskie Zapisky*. no. 9. 1940. p. 190.

Tatars emigrating no more than two thirds arrived in Turkey."[56] To the number of those who perished in storms on the Black Sea should be added those who were robbed and dumped at sea by piratical ship crews who appear to have made great profit preying on the simple Tatar peasants.[57]

While the number of 60,000 casualties resulting from the migration reached by several sources is unrealistically high, one should not underestimate the toll that traveling in the hazardous conditions of this undeveloped part of the world during the 19th century took on the Tatar peasants who had little experience with travel. An English source from the Dobruca gives this harrowing description of the conditions facing Crimean Tatars sailing to the Ottoman Empire:

> Wretched, ill-founded Turkish steamers and sailing ships had been provided for their transit and there was no food or water except what was brought by the emigrants themselves. Each ship was crowded above and below by a living mass tightly wedged together by bales of bedding, farming implements, carts and not infrequently by spiteful, screaming Bactrian camels, which were the only stock brought over.
>
> For days these poor creatures lay huddled together, suffering all the tortures of sea-sickness and in an atmosphere one might see and feel, to say nothing of smelling and tasting! Small-pox, typhus, fever, and measles broke out on the very first trip, and yet over and over again the same ships returned for their living freights, without any attempt at disinfection, or even being cleansed. Hundreds died at sea and were thrown overboard, and as soon as the living had crept ashore, dozens of dead were found left in the holds of the ships. Soon the beaches and sloping cliffs around the bay were swarming. The aged, the infirm, the sick lay dying stretched in the sun.[58]

Conditions on arrival in Anatolia or the Dobruca (many Tatars were trans-shipped from Anatolia to the Dobruca) were not much better than those faced on the journey and many Tatars became quickly disillusioned with the romanticized 'white soil' of the Ottoman Empire. From Russia comes the following typical description of the Tatars' sad fate in the Ottoman Empire:

> Due to the terrible exploitation of the Tsarist officials and *pomeshchiks*, 150,000 Tatars left their homes and unharvested fields and rushed to the ports of the Black Sea in order to sail on frail ships to the Sultan's

[56] M. Goldenberg. "Krym i Krymskie Tatary." *Vestnik Evropy*. no. 6. 1883. p. 74.

[57] Vol'fson. op. cit. no. 55. p. 190.

[58] John Barkley. op. cit. no. 21. p. 228.

> Turkey where, according to the *mullahs*, *mirzas* and emissaries of the sultan, the 'golden mountains awaited them.' The Tatars believed these false promises, but this trust cost them 60,000 souls who died on the Black Sea without having reached their destination. Those who actually succeeded in reaching 'the promised land' fell from frying pan and into the fire. The majority of them died in the wastes of Turkey or within the borders of Bulgaria and Romania.[59]

As this desperate, and increasingly disillusioned, population arrived in the Dobruca through the ports of Varna and Constanta, they were transported inland by rail (on the newly established Constanta-Cerna Voda rail line) or in hundreds of carts requisitioned from the sullen Bulgarian peasantry. At this juncture a contemporary source recorded an event on the journey that foreshadowed the horror the Tatars would encounter on Stalin's trains to exile in Central Asia in 1944. On their train journey to distribution points in the interior according to an English observer "Many died in the waggons and were thrown out as the train moved along by their friends, now rendered callous by their extreme misery."[60] The Tatars that survived the voyage and inland journey were dispersed to such Dobrucan towns as Tulcea, Silistre, Vidin, Lom and Mecidiye.

Mecidiye in particular became a center for the Dobrucan Tatar immigrant community and deserves particular mention. Named in honor of Sultan Abdul Mecid (1839-61), Mecidiye was founded in the Karasu (Black Water) Valley in 1856 and developed as a regional economic center. Mecidiye was built on modern European lines, with grid pattern streets, a *khan* (inn for merchants), a mosque, school and maintenance center for the Constanta-Cerna Voda railway.[61] As the Crimean Tatars arrived in the Dobruca following the Crimean War, the Ottoman government constructed 3,100 homes in the region for the immigrants and 1,800 were built in the Mecidiye vicinity.[62] The Nogai Tatars appear to have concentrated their settlement in and around the city of Mecidiye.

These and other preparations appear to have been sufficient for the initial wave of Tatar immigrants who arrived in the Dobruca during the Crimean War. The initial Tatar settlers were granted daily food allowances, a pair of oxen, seed and, when locusts destroyed

[59] Vol'fson. op cit. no. 55. p. 186.
[60] John Barkley. op. cit. no. 21. p. 229.
[61] Kemal Karpat. op. cit. no. 37. p. 10.
[62] Ibid. p. 11.

their crops in 1857, wheat for bread.[63] In many instances the Ottoman government also obliged the Bulgarian population to house the immigrants in their homes for up to 4 years. This burden on the Christian peasantry would have certainly contributed to the growing dissatisfaction this people felt on the eve of the great Bulgarian uprising of 1876.

Despite their best efforts, the Ottoman authorities could not, however, adequately handle the sheer numbers of Tatars arriving in the Dobruca after 1859. An eyewitness mentions the Ottoman government's lack of preparation for the migration of 1860-61 and states:

> It is not surprising, but is to be regretted, that the Turkish Government never made the slightest preparation for the thousands that were known to be coming, and when the first installment arrived at Kustendjie (Constanta), no food had been prepared, no shelter provided, and not even a bullock cart in readiness to move the poor creatures from the sea-bench where they were landed. The first settlers had been as the few bees that buzz about the hive before the swarm, but now the whole mass was on the wing, and within a few weeks eighty thousand Tartars were landed at Kustendjie alone, and vast numbers at different towns on the Danube.[64]

On more than one occasion the Ottoman authorities sent word to Russia informing Tsarist officials that they could not absorb any further immigrants.[65] While Russian and Western sources have accused the Ottoman emissaries of luring the Tatars to Rumelia and Anatolia with "sweet-sounding promises," the opposite appears to have been the case. The Ottoman administration actually attempted to prevent the arriving Tatars from inviting more of their kin to the Dobruca.[66] Given their lack of preparation and the sheer size of

[63] Pinson points out, for instance, that the Nogais who settled in the Edirne vicinity were supported by the government and on many occasions the Ottoman *Muhacirin Komisiyonu* (Immigrant Commission) assisted the arrivals with daily rations *(yevmiye)*, farming supplies and, if possible, livestock and housing. Mark Pinson. op. cit. no. 19. p. 1048.
[64] John Barkley. op. cit. no. 21. pp. 226-227.
[65] G. Levitskii. "Pereselenie Krymskikh Tatar iz Kryma v Turtsiiu." *Vestnik Evropy*. no. 10. 1882. p. 622.
[66] Kirimli states emphatically "Ottoman sources do not reveal any significant or systematic Ottoman campaign to attract emigrants from the Crimea." Hakan Kirimli. *National Movements and National Identity Among the Crimean Tatars*. Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1996. p. 8.

the migration of 1860-61, Fisher claims "the results had to be catastrophic."[67]

Thousands of Tatars could not find housing, a crop failure in 1861 had disastrous results for the weakened arrivals, many Tatars had problems finding work and during this period "many impoverished Tatars were simply wandering about."[68] A contemporary account writes:

> A second emigration of Tatars took place after the Crimean War, when these unfortunate people, in a similar plight to the Circassians, came to join their kin in the Dobrudcha and other parts of European Turkey. They were poor and for the most part destitute of every requisite of life. The Turkish Government did its best to help them by giving grants of land etc. but those who settled as agriculturists were unfortunate, for a series of bad seasons crushed their first efforts, and, unassisted by further relief, they remained in a stationary condition of poverty, notwithstanding many praiseworthy efforts to better their condition.[69]

Stories of the problems confronting the arriving Tatars in their imagined homeland appear to have made their way back to the Crimea and certainly played a role in preventing further migrations to the 'white soil' of the Ottoman Empire. By the time the migration had ground to halt at the end of 1861, the number of Tatars in the Dobruca had risen from between 20,000-30,000 in 1857 to between 80,000 and 100,000.[70] The Tatar population of the Dobruca in this period may have thus equaled the number of Tatars remaining in the Crimea itself. The overall percentage of Tatars in the Dobruca by this time was close to 40%.[71] Many towns in the region became predominantly Tatar in the process: the total Tatar population of Hirsova, for example, was 15%, Constanta 54%, Mecidiye 65% and Mangalia (in the southern extreme of Dobruca) 76%.[72]

The Tatar migrants to the Dobruca appear to have benefited from the fact that there was already a Tatar presence in the region and

[67] Alan Fisher. "Emigration of Muslims from the Russian Empire in the Years after the Crimean War." *Geschichte Ost Europas*. vol. 35. no. 3. 1987. p. 364.
[68] Pinson. op. cit. no. 19. p. 1043
[69] Mrs. John Blunt. *The People of Turkey*. London; John Murray. 1878. p. 156.
[70] Pinson places the number of Tatars in the Dobruca at 80,000. Mark Pinson. op. cit. no. 19. p. 1048. while Inalcik places it at 100,000. Inalcik. op. cit. no. 23. p. 613. "Tatary i Cherkessy". op. cit. no. 36. p. 47.
[71] Fisher. op. cit. no. 67. p. 368.
[72] Ibid.

the official in charge of their settlement, Nusret Bey, was himself of Tatar or Circassian origin.[73] Other Tatars made their way to the *pashaliks* (districts) of Vidin and Nish and to the Maritsa and Tunja valleys in Bulgaria proper, to Macedonia and as far as Eastern Thrace (present-day European Turkey and neighboring Greek lands), where the Giray dynasty had long maintained residences at such places as Yanbolu and Subasiköy. The existence of village names in this region, such as Tatar Pazarcik, Tatar Bunar, Tatar Dere, Tatar Köy (Konstantinovo), and Tatarli, point to the Crimean Tatar presence in this region. Several cities in Thrace and Bulgaria also have *Tatar mahalles* (district-neighborhoods), most notably the Bulgarian city of Shumla's Tatar Mahallesi.

Differences Between the Tats and Nogais in the Dobruca

The Yaliboyu Tats, whose language and customs were essentially Ottoman Turkish, appear to have experienced less difficulties in adapting to their new Ottoman homeland than the Nogais, whose customs and Kipchak Turkic language were looked down upon by the large Turkish population of the Dobruca. The majority of Nogai Tatars settling in the Dobruca appear to have settled in the countryside while the Tat minority was concentrated in the towns. Those who settled in the towns were predominately artisans and craftsmen from the Crimean south and they appear to have plied their crafts in such cities as Mecidiye with considerable success. According to a contemporary source "Those who settled in towns fared better; all who were acquainted with some handicraft at once set to work and executed their different branches of industry with so much activity, neatness and honesty that they soon reached prosperity and comfort."[74]

In his work, Edmond Schutz delineates the Nogais of Dobruca (whom he labels 'real Tatars') from the Tats according to their occupation. According to Schutz "The Dobrudjan Tats are strongly distinguished from the Tatars of this region by their occupation. According to the personal communication of St. Mandoki Kongur, the Tats are mostly merchants, craftsmen or farmers as opposed to

[73] Pinson. op. cit. no. 19. p. 1051.
[74] Ms. John Blunt. op. cit. no. 69. p. 156.

the Tatars whose most typical occupation is animal husbandry. The Tats willingly take up hired work in towns, the Tatars not."[75] The Nogais appear to have concentrated in certain areas that had, for centuries, been settled by their people, namely: Baba Dağ, Hirsov, and Machin; in the Karasu Valley around Mecidiye; in the port of Constanta and countless smaller settlements in the northern Dobruca. Eugene Pittard points out that the majority of the Dobruca's Tatar inhabitants were of Nogai origin with "Mongol" physical characteristics.[76]

Some of the oldest villages in the Dobruca were of Nogai origin and their ancient clan markers known as *tabin taşis*, marked with distinctive clan *tamghas* could be found throughout this steppe plain which "had the imprint of the old homeland of the Tatars."[77] While the act of migrating to a new land did eventually overcome the differences between the Nogais and Tats which had been so pronounced in their old homeland, the immigrants initially brought their old divisions with them to the Dobruca. The Tats of the Baidar and Içel valleys in the southern Crimea (who migrated to the Dobruca during the Crimean War), for example, kept the memories of their micro-homelands alive in the Dobruca.[78] The Tatar immigrants from the Crimean coast passed on to their children the stories of their home villages and Tatars in the diaspora have, for the first time recently begun to collect these tales of the 'Green Isle'.[79]

The Tats of the Dobruca continued to be delineated from the Nogais (who came from another micro-homeland, the *Cöl)* and were a self-conscious people.[80] Interestingly enough, the Tatars of the

[75] Edmund Schutz. "The Tat People in the Crimea". *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.* vol. 31. 1977. p. 96.

[76] Eugene Pittard. op. cit. no. 35. pp. 315-352.

[77] "Tatary i Cherkessy." op. cit. no. 36. p. 49. Ghizzela Suliteanu. "Le 'Tabin' dans le Tradition Populaire des Tatars Nogay de Dobroudja. *Turcica.* vol. 12. 1980. p. 96. See also Ghizzela Sultieanu. "Le N'demez. Une Ancienne Costume de Travail Collectif chez' les Tatars de Dobroudja. *Turcica.* vol. 4. 1972. pp. 77-102.

[78] Schutz. op. cit. no. 75. p. 97

[79] In a series of *destans* collected from the Yaliboyu *(Yaliboyunun Hali)*, the Tatars of the Dobruca kept the memory of Kefe (with its "wealth from Istanbul and long market") Yalta (with its "Tatar tobacconists"), Dereköy ("with its beautiful brown-eyed girls") and other coastal homeland-villages alive in their new homeland. Altan Arasli. "Kirim Türklerinin Muhacir Türkleri ve Halk Destanlari." *Emel.* no. 56. 1970. p. 30.

[80] Schutz. op. cit. no. 75. p. 97.

Dobruca also identified themselves by their port of exit from the Crimea. In his work, entitled *Dobruca and the Turks,* the great Dobrucan Tatar nationalist and historian, Müstecib Ülküsal, provides the following description of the role that the Tatar immigrants' Crimean origins played in shaping their ethnonyms in the Dobruca:

> Those who were forced to migrate through the ports of Kerch and Kefe in the Crimean Peninsula are 'Keriç Tatars', those who arrived after they were forced from Or (Or Kapı, Perekop) and Gozleve (Evpatoriia) are known as 'Çongar Tatars' and those coming from the Bahçesaray vicinity, and especially the Yaliboyu, are called 'Tats'. Those coming earlier from Bessarabia (the Buçak) are given the name 'Nogay'.[81]

According to this account, the Tats of the Dobruca were distinguished from the Nogais by their lack of "Mongol" features, light complexions and blond hair.[82] For the most part, the Tats settled in the Dobrucan villages of Pazarcık, Silistre, Balçık, Çatallar, Mumçul, Veyisköy, and Toksofu (near Constanta) and Cavuşköy and Omurlar in the Tulcea district. The Keriç (Kerch) and Çongar Tatars (Çongar signifying the northern districts of the Crimea) were predominantly Nogais who settled in the Dobrucan countryside where they acquired fame throughout the Dobruca for their horse-raising and equine skills.[83] The two groups continued to celebrate separate festivals that could be traced back to their places of origin in the Crimea, the Buçak or the Kuban. Mention should also be made here of the sub-ethnic origin of the Girays of the Dobruca who were delineated from the majority "Tatar" (i.e Nogai) population of the Dobruca. According to contemporary accounts "The Girays are, by origin, a Caucasian people, as is testified by their physiognomy which is sharply distinguished from the Tatar type."[84]

On occasion, the sub-ethnic differences between the Nogais and Tat Tatars resulted in friction between the two communities. Karpat writes:

> The Crimean immigrants brought with them to Mecidiye their old class structure and the traditional conflicts that had divided them in their place of origin; the most significant conflict was between the Nogay

[81] Müstecib Ulküsal. *Dobruca ve Türkler.* Ankara; Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü. 1966. p. 53.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid. p. 55.

[84] "Tatary i Cherkessy." op. cit. no. 36. p. 53.

> and the people of the town. The Nogay were mostly people from the hinterland and the northern plains of the Crimea who had been chiefly engaged in agriculture and pastoral occupations. Attached to their tribal customs and organization, they had been looked down upon as uncouth and primitive.[85]

The inter-group antipathies that originated in the Crimea resulted in much dissatisfaction among the Nogais and many of these herdsmen and farmers considered returning to the Russian Empire until the Ottoman authorities began granting this group certain privileges designed to mollify them.[86] Müstecip Ülküsal states that, historically, "there was very little sense of unity" among the Tatars of Dobruca and this doubtless had its origins in the Crimea where the differences between the Yaliboyu Tats, Yaila Mountain Tats and Nogais were further compounded by clan and sub-regional differences between isolated valleys and coastal villages.[87]

Even as the two groups began to slowly homogenize in their new homeland and to identify themselves simply by the term 'Tatar', the Tats and Nogais kept some of their distinct traditions right up until World War II. One of the most unique traditions of the tightly-knit, patriarchal families of the Nogais in the Dobruca, for example, was the distinctive custom of building elongated, white-washed stone houses roofed with thatch or clay tiles. As a Nogai elder's sons and grandsons grew to maturity and married, they built on to their *kart baba's* (grandfather) house, extending it with additional rooms. A Dobrucan Nogai describes this tradition as follows:

> The enlarged family existed until 1944. Mention should be made of Hagi Regep; his sons had lived together with their uncles and all of them were agricultural people. I may give another example of five brothers who had lived in the same house until 1945, their row of rooms running along under the paternal roof. They used to sit around the same sofa table eating from a big plate placed in the middle...*Such things are common only with the Nogai, the Crimean Tatars and Turks do not know them.*[88]

In the long term, however, the whole process of migrating and adjusting to a new land had a unifying effect on the society of the Tat and Nogai Tatars of the Dobruca and this people appears to

[85] Kemal Karpat. op. cit. no. 37. p. 18.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Müstecib Ulküsal. op. cit. no. 81. p. 56.
[88] L.P. Marcu. op. cit. no. 31. pp. 501-542. p. 501.

have been united, in particular, by their collective memories of their former homeland in the Russian Empire. Thus, according to a Russian source "this exodus united the Crimean Tatars and Nogais, between whom there had not previously been either sympathy, unity nor unanimity. In only two or three Nogai villages in the Crimea, the former Melek and Kernech, had they previously blended."[89] The act of immigrating to the Dobruca also appears to have had a considerable leveling effect on the Crimean Tatars of various ethnic and social origins.[90]

Over time the Tats and Nogais of the Dobruca began to intermarry and many of their customs were shared in the process.[91] The Nogais and the Tats had, in particular, the same traditions of tightly-knit patriarchal families and their mutual deep respect for their elders was seen in such sayings as "the word of the elders is the written word" *(kartlarin sözü, kitabin sözü)*.[92] Both groups also continued to celebrate the pre-Islamic *toys* (holidays), such as the spring festival of Tepreş, which originated among the ancient peoples of the Crimea. In the festival of Tepreş, the youth of a Tatar village dressed in their best clothes on the first Friday of May, visited the local mosque, friends and family, and gathered to celebrate the occasion in nearby forests, on hilltops or in meadows.[93]

Although Ülküsal claims that the Yaliboyu Tats originally had a cuisine that was shaped by their unique coastal environment (typified by many dishes with fruit and vegetables, such as *sarma*, a dish made of meat and rice wrapped in vine leaves) they shared much of their cuisine in the Dobruca with the Nogais. In particular, the Tatar sub-groups were united in their love of their national dish *çibörek* (half moon-shaped, meat filled pastries) which was "the most loved Crimean Turk food."[94] The two groups also shared stories and legends from the Crimea of Tatar heroes *(batirs)* such as Çorabatir, Celkildebatir, Edegebatir, Esebatir and the "Robin Hood" of the Crimea, Halim Aydamak.[95]

While the unifying memories of the Crimea among the Tatars of

[89] Markevich. op. cit. no. 3. p. 396.
[90] Kemal Karpat. op. cit. no. 37. p. 19.
[91] Edmond Schutz. op. cit. no. 75. p. 95.
[92] Müstecib Ulküsal. op. cit. no. 81. p 85.
[93] Ibid. p 88.
[94] Ibid. p.97.
[95] Nedret Mahmut. *Bozcigit. Dobruca Tatar Masallari.* Bucharest; Kriterion. 1988. pp. 7-8.

the Dobruca were initially of a folk nature and took the form of peasant songs and tales of the 'Green Isle', the family stories of the Crimean homeland took on greater political significance in the early 20th century as a national movement began to form among those Tatars still remaining in the Crimea. This growing nationalist re-identification with the Crimea as a homeland was to have a further unifying influence among the Dobrucan Tatar diaspora in the 20th century. As the Ottoman Empire retreated from this region after 1878, and the Dobrucan 'white soil' became a part of the Christian nation states of Bulgaria and Romania, this religiously-defined homeland lost much of its sacral significance for the descendants of the Crimean Tatar *muhacirs* and ceased to be considered Muslim land.

As the increasingly disenfranchised Tatars were excluded from these exclusively Bulgarian and Romanian nation building processes in their Balkan homelands (which had no room for Turkic-Muslim 'outsiders'), it was to the Crimean Peninsula that many secularized Dobrucan Tatars were to look when constructing a national homeland of their own. The rise of national sentiment among the Tatars of the Dobruca was, like the national movement among the Tatars of the Crimea, largely a reaction to the fact that the surrounding Christian peoples were themselves creating national identities that did not include Turkic-Muslim minorities.

While the term 'diaspora' has been overused of late ("native" American "Indian" tribes have even been considered a "diaspora of Asia" in recent works), it was this trans-generational imaginary link to the Crimean homeland (which initially had a folk form and was apolitical) and a lack of assimilation that defined the Dobrucan Tatars as a diaspora and not an assimilated migrant group. Events in the Crimea continued to shape Dobrucan Tatar identity long after their arrival in the region; most Tatars of the Dobruca had kin remaining in the Crimea; and Tatars from the Crimea continued to migrate to the Dobruca right up until World War II. For many Tatars in the Crimea the Dobruca was a second homeland and almost every Crimean Tatar in the Crimea had kin living in this region. For those living in the Dobruca, the 'Green Isle' of the Crimea continued to be a cherished land that was constructed and kept alive in this people's collective memory.

In addition, it should be noted that the Tatars of the Dobruca were, for the most part, able to maintain their traditional social structures and patriarchal family unity in their new homeland. In

contrast to the dispersed Crimean Tatars who settled in Anatolia, the compactly settled Tatar communities of the Dobruca also kept their language and traditions alive in the 20th century and continued to distinguish themselves from the neighboring Romanian, Bulgarian and, to a lesser extent, Turkish populations of the Dobruca.

Although the Ottomans generally made no distinction between their Muslim subjects on the basis of their ethnicity, the Tatars of the Dobruca were (perhaps as a response to this continued unity) one of the rare exceptions and came to be recognized by the Sultan's officials as the 'Tatar Tribe' *(Kabail-i Tatar)*.[96]

With the creation of the USSR on the ruins of the Russian Empire in 1917 and subsequent disruption of the Tatar society of the Crimean Peninsula by the Bolsheviks through collectivization, cultural Sovietization (i.e. Russification), purges, and most importantly, mass deportation, the Tatar community of the Crimea was to lose many of its old ways, customs and culture. Crimean Tatar men and women in the USSR began to wear the European clothes of the Soviet proletariat, Tatar-Islamic traditions died out or were outlawed, centuries of agricultural traditions ended when Tatar farms became collectivized and finally, this people's culture (and in particular its language) was devastated by the process that saw this small community scattered far from the land that had forged its unique character as a result of the deportation of 1944. As much as the contemporary Crimean Tatar nationalists in the former Soviet Union would be reluctant to admit it, in many ways the Russified Crimean Tatars of the former USSR (most of whom know Russian better than Tatar) may have more in common with the Russians than with the Turks or even other Muslim peoples of the former Soviet Empire.

On many levels the post-Soviet Crimean Tatars had their cultural roots to the Crimea severed by their experiences in the Soviet era and it is in the Dobruca that perhaps the most authentic Crimean Tatar traditions have been maintained. The Tatars of the Dobruca did not come under Christian rule until almost one hundred years after the fall of the Crimea, their society was not introduced to Communism until *after* World War II, and they were not deported from the lands that their ancestors had, in many cases, lived on for hundreds of years (making the Dobrucan Tatars the oldest Muslim group in the Balkans). In many ways a more pristine Crimean Tatar

[96] Kemal Karpat. op. cit. no. 37. p. 20.

culture was actually preserved in the Dobruca than in the Crimea itself.

Many of the Dobrucan Tatars' customs reflect the culture of the Crimean Tatars as it existed a 100 years ago. During World War II, for example, L. P. Marcu reports that a Nogai Tatar who made his way from the Crimea to the Dobruca (as many did to avoid German and Soviet attacks) could still find distant kin in the region because here they continued to use the *khazaiak tamgha* (goose foot clan symbol) of his clan on their family gravestones.[97] The *tamghas* of the Crimea had on the other hand long since lost much of their importance and, according to a Soviet account from 1925, were only used to brand cattle.[98] In many ways, visitors to the Dobruca today can see traditional Crimean Tatar village life preserved in its most historically authentic form and accounts from the this Tatar land are of importance in understanding the Crimean Tatars' historic traditions and culture.

Crimean Tatar Culture in the Dobruca

Visitors to this distant corner of Europe leave interesting insights into the understudied world of the Dobrucan Tatars of the 19th century that reveal much about the process that saw this people adapt to their new environment. Compared to the wave of Circassian immigrants who arrived on the shores of the Dobruca in the tens of thousands between 1861 and 1864 the Crimean Tatar settlers appear to have made a relatively smooth adjustment to their new homeland.[99] John Barkley records:

> Little by little the Tartars drifted off, some to lonely spots on the Dobrudja, others to forests higher up the country, and in time all that remained alive had shaken down into some sort of new home...In a few years these hard-working and enterprising people had quite changed the face of the Dobrudja; the great grass plains were ploughed up, and the entire country converted into a vast field of corn. And this in the face of innumerable obstacles that would have broken the hearts

[97] L. P. Marcu. op. cit. no. 26. p. 538.
[98] Albert Einsthein. "Etnos". *Krymski Tatary. Istoricheskko-Lingvistechskii Ocherk.* ed. A. Memetov. Simferopol; Anaiurt. 1993. p. 22.
[99] As many as 600,000 Circassians may have settled in European 'Turkey'. Mark Pinson. "The Ottoman Colonization of the Circassians in Rumili After the Crimean War." *Etudes Balkiniques.* 1972. no. 20. p. 75.

> of a less plucky race...In spite of all difficulties, the Tartars have prospered, and are now the richest and most business-like of all the various races of Bulgaria.[100]

After their initial troubles, the Crimean Tatars appear to have applied the same tradition of hard work and labor to the development of their farms, raising of herds and practicing of artisan crafts in the Dobruca that made them such a valued class in the Crimea. An account from 1866 states:

> The Tartar villages, moreover, are making progress year by year, and it is easy to guess the reason, for whenever you come across a field really well cultivated, or some grafted fruit-trees, or a field of potatoes, you need not go far to find a colony of Tartars. They are also frequently traders as well as farmers; they buy tobacco, corn, butter, and sheep, and sell them at a profit. They are generally honest, and this rare quality secures them connection sufficiently numerous to enable them to compete even with the *bakal* (merchant-seller) as far as the amount of their profits, though they do not exact the same iniquitous profit. They never, however, suffer the allurements of commerce to make them forget that the true source of riches in Turkey lies *in the earth*; their gains are devoted to the purchasing, clearing, ploughing, and sowing of more fields, and are not, like the savings of the *rayah* (Christian peasants), buried in an earthen pot, employed to fan the dying embers of an insurrection in Crete, or in usury speculation...The *rayah* leaves everything to Nature; and gets more than enough for his wants; the Tatar assists Nature, and his crops are treble those of the Christian.[101]

The Tatars of the Dobruca appear to have exceeded the expectations of the Ottoman government and in a few years had brought under cultivation much of this war-devastated plain. In his account from the 1870s, James Baker wrote "if the Tatars of Dobrutchga numbered two million instead of two hundred thousand, it would be all the better for Turkey."[102] The Tatar settlers of the Dobrucan plain appear to have extended agriculture and livestock raising over much of this area and they were considered "a quiet, steady, industrious element" by their Christian neighbors.[103]

[100] John Barkley. *Between the Danube and the Black Sea.* op. cit. no. 54. pp. 232-233.
[101] Stanislas St. Clair and C.A. Brophy. *Twelve Years Study of the Eastern Question.* London; 1877. p. 168.
[102] James Baker. *Turkey in Europe.* London; Cassell Petter and Galpin. 1877. p. 486.
[103] Mark Pinson. op. cit. no. 19. p. 1057.

The Crimean Tatars succeeded in getting along with both their Christian and Muslim neighbors and often acted as intermediaries between the Turks and the local Christians.[104] This may have explained the Tatars' growing importance to the Dobruca as cart drivers between the mixed villages of the region.[105] While the untame Circassian highlanders made a name for themselves as feared *başi-bazouks* (irregular raiders) and marauders throughout the Balkans after arriving in the Dobruca and greater Rumelia, the Tatars by contrast appear to have had cordial relations with their Turkish, Bulgarian and Romanian neighbors.[106] The Circassians had become embittered towards Christians after their forced expulsion from their devastated homeland by the Russian army, while the Tatars had long had good relations with their Christian neighbors in the Crimea, Kuban and south Ukrainian steppe. The Bulgarians and the Tatars appear to have shared an enmity towards the lawless Circassians who often stole or raped Bulgarian and Tatar women.[107]

The Tatars' tradition of hospitality towards Christians appears to have continued in the Dobruca and 19th and 20th century accounts alike describe the Tatars of this region as a "peaceable and industrious people."[108] The following account from Russia is typical:

> Enjoying good relations with the Bulgarians, they watch over them and consider it their duty to defend them against the extortions of the Turkish *beys*, *ağas*, and owners of the country and against the oppression of state officials and occasional military units, this duty they discharge with strong determination despite the frequent danger to their lives. In return, the Bulgarians work their fields and gardens without recompense.[109]

It is interesting to note that, as the Bulgarians began to organize underground nationalist movements aimed at liberating their country from Ottoman rule (in the 1860s and 1870s), the Dobrucan Tatars protected their Christian neighbors involved in such activities from

[104] One can theorize that almost a hundred years of exposure to Russian culture and language would have enabled many Crimean Tatars to establish a rapport with the local Bulgarian Slavs.
[105] Gregoire Danesco. *Dobrogea.* Bucharest; Independance Roumaine. 1903. p. 166.
[106] Mark Pinson. op. cit. no. 99. p. 79.
[107] L.P. Marcu. op. cit. no. 31. p. 506.
[108] *A Handbook of Bulgaria.* London; Great Britain Admiralty. 1920. p. 72.
[109] "Tatary i Cherkessy." op. cit. no. 36. p. 50.

the Ottoman authorities. Members of the Giray dynasty in the Dobruca, such as the respected 80 year old leader of this clan, Sultan Ahmet Giray, used their clout to give asylum to insurrectionists and often helped them escape to Bucharest, Belgrade and Athens. A contemporary source stated that "a great number of people owe these Tatars for saving them from the gallows."[110] In light of this service and the generally amicable nature of relations between the Tatars and Bulgarians, this source felt that, if the Christian subjects of the sultan were to be successful in overthrowing the Ottoman rule, the Tatars would continue to live in peace with their Christian neighbors.[111]

Few could have, however, foreseen the vicious and widespread nature of the random ethnic cleansing of Muslims that would sweep through these lands when the Bulgarians and Romanians (aided by the might of Imperial Russia) rose in the great rebellion of 1876-77 and created exclusive national states from ethnically mixed Ottoman provinces. As was the case recently in Bosnia in the early 1990s when Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims who had long lived as neighbors turned on one another under the influence of nationalism, the Bulgarians and Romanians often attacked their former Tatar neighbors regardless of their previously amicable relations as they came under the influence of nationalism. The cataclysmic events surrounding the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the south-eastern Balkans were to see many of the traditionally mixed Muslim-Christian hamlets of the region destroyed and tens of thousands of Muslims killed or expelled from a land many had for centuries considered their homeland. This event was to lead to the collapse of Ottoman power in Romania and Bulgaria and to see the mass expulsion of Muslim populations that had, in many instances, lived in the Balkans since the 1300s.

While some Tatar communities did remain in Turkish Thrace (Turkey's toe-hold in Europe) most sought security by migrating across the Bosphorous and into Western Anatolia. Here they settled in towns such as Eskişehir, Konya, Izmir, Karayavşan Köy, Kalecikkaya, Kirikkale, Gebze or in the capital of the empire itself, Istanbul. In scores of villages throughout Anatolia Crimean Tatar immigrants from Europe began to build homes, adapt to the unfa-

[110] Ibid. p. 53.
[111] Ibid.

miliar environment of Anatolia and eventually to partake in the building of a new state built upon the concept of Turkish nationalism. These refugees from smoldering villages of the new states of Romania and Bulgaria were to find many of their Tatar kin settled on the plains of Anatolia from previous migrations and were to, once again, begin the process of rebuilding their lives after the disruption of uprooting and migration.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GREAT RETREAT. THE FORMATION OF THE CRIMEAN TATAR DIASPORA IN TURKEY

According to most estimates there are between 3 million and 5 million citizens in the Republic of Turkey today who trace their origins to the 18th and 19th century Tatar migrations from the Crimean Peninsula.[1] Alan Fisher states "Some Tatar spokesmen there claim that the numbers reach five million, and there may be some truth to this claim."[2] As many as 400,000 Crimean Tatars (the highest realistic total number) may have immigrated to the Ottoman Empire from Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries and, with the Tatar-Muslims' tradition of large patriarchal families, there may well be several million Turks of Tatar descent in Turkey today.

Although the number of 5 million must be taken with considerable caution, this number is routinely used by Crimean Tatar nationalists in Turkey and the former Soviet Union and this statistic certainly has currency in the Crimean Tatars' common imagination. Regardless of the actual number of Turks who claim Crimean origins (the Turkish government does not have statistics on the issue), the vast majority of these descendants of the 19th century Tatar migrations to the Ottoman Empire are Turkified and have only a passive identification with their former homeland or the Crimean Tatars in the former Soviet Union. The number of "Crimean Turk-Tatars" who are actively involved with their former homeland probably number a couple hundred thousand at most and certainly do not number in the millions.

There are also smaller Crimean Tatar diaspora enclaves in Romania and Bulgaria that survived the cataclysmic events of 1876-

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[1] Karpat estimates the population at 3 million maximum. Kemal Karpat. *Ottoman Population. Demographic and Social Characteristics.* Madison Wisconsin; University of Wisconsin Press. 1985. p. 66. Lowell Bezanis puts the number at 5 million. Lowell Bezanis. "Soviet Muslim Émigrés in the Republic of Turkey." *Central Asian Survey.* 1994. 13 (1). p. 106.

[2] Alan Fisher. "The Crimean Tatars, the USSR, and Turkey." *Soviet Asian Ethnic Frontiers.* ed. William McCagg and Brian Silver. New York; Pergamon Press. 1979. p. 14.

79 and remained in the divided land of Dobruca. Over the centuries the Tatars of the Romanian Dobruca, in particular, have maintained some form of communal identification with the Crimean Peninsula as their historic homeland and it was from this area that many of the most influential 20th century Crimean Tatar nationalists were to emerge. The approximately quarter of a million Crimean Tatars of the Crimean Peninsula today thus find themselves in the same position as the Jews who have larger diaspora populations living beyond the borders of their historic homelands than within. As with the Jewish and Armenian diasporas, the level of identification with Crimea among the Crimean Tatars of this Ottoman diaspora varies, from those who are activists in homeland associations, to those who only passively identify themselves as being of Crimean Tatar descent.

For the Crimean Tatars of the Central Asian diaspora the link to the Crimean homeland is of course closer than that found among the Crimean Tatars of Turkey and the Balkans. The post-Soviet returnees who have migrated from Central Asia to the Crimean homeland grew up in the Crimea themselves or were raised in exile on stories of a homeland that was lost to their people through two hundred years of forced migration and deportation. In their communal histories, the Crimean Tatars in the former Soviet Union link the out-migrations of their ancestors in the 18th and 19th century to the Ottoman Empire (during the so called *ilk sürgün*, the 'first exile') to their own deportation in 1944 (the *ikinci sürgün*, the 'second exile'). It is this sense of shared tragedy and emotional ties to the Crimea that unite the Crimean Tatars of the former Soviet Union with many of their kin in Turkey and the Balkans.

In spite of the cleavages that have resulted from their decades of living under differing state systems, there is a strong feeling of kinship between the Crimean Tatars of the CIS and those of the Turkish, Romanian and Bulgarian diasporas who have maintained ties with the Crimean homeland. The Crimean Tatars who have, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, been struggling for rights in the Crimea also take a small measure of comfort in knowing that they have a 'big brother' in the Crimean Tatar community of Turkey (and to a lesser extent the smaller diaspora communities of Bulgaria and Romania). Much of the struggle today among Crimean Tatar nationalists of the Turkish diaspora and those in the Crimea is focused on politically mobilizing the "five million", largely inactive, Crimean Turk-Tatars of Turkey and instilling in this community a more active link to their former homeland and their parent community in the former Soviet Union.

In the Crimean context, Crimean Tatar *Mejlis* ('Parliament', the self proclaimed parallel government of the Crimean Tatars) leaders make frequent calls to their kin in Turkey to support them in their disputes with the local authorities (most of whom are Soviet era *apparatchiks* with anti-Tatar leanings).[3] Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia write:

> The prospect of the entire exiled Crimean Tatar population returning to the Crimea from the former Soviet republics and presently independent states of the CIS (an additional 250,00 persons) and from the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey and the Balkans, which was formed during the forced emigration of the Crimean Tatars from Tsarist and Soviet Russia from the eighteenth through the twentieth century (these number several million more), is a constant consideration of the leaders of the Crimean Tatar ethnic movement.[4]

Crimean Tatar leaders, especially in the early 1990s, deliberately made references to the "five million" strong Crimean Tatar diaspora of Turkey in their confrontations with local Crimean authorities who attempted to prevent them from settling on land in the Crimea. A typical article in the Crimean Tatar newspaper *Voice of the Crimea (Golos Kryma)* in 1996 claimed "From 4 to 7 million ethnic kin of the Crimean Tatars live in Turkey. They not only carefully follow events in the Crimea, but strongly assist in the development of the Crimean Tatars."[5]

To this day these leaders continue make regular appeals to this community in Turkey in their struggles with the Crimean administration. When the Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada* (Upper Parliament) ratified a constitution for the semi-independent Crimean Republic

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[3] The Crimean Peninsula has been described as a 'Red Island' or 'Conservatory of Communism' as a result of the strong influence of the Soviet era *nomenklatura* in the peninsula since the collapse of the USSR.

[4] Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia. "The Crimean Tatar Question and the Present Ethnopolitical Situation in the Crimea." *Russian Politics and Law.* vol. 33, no. 6. p. 33. One Crimean Tatar supporter summed up the returning Crimean Tatars' conceptualization of their links to the Turkish diaspora when he claimed "According to the latest argument, there are 500,000 Crimean Tatars-that is few for the Crimea. This can be agreed upon. But five million Crimean Tatars who live in Turkey are prepared to return to the homeland of their fathers." "Ukraina-Turtsiia Sotrudnichestvo." *Golos Kryma.* Dec. 16, 1991. p. 3.

[5] Ibid.

that did not grant the Crimean Tatars special representation in December of 1998, for example, this people's representatives made typical requests for support from Turkey and the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey. The Crimean Tatar leader, Nadir Bekirov's comments are interesting. According to Bekirov "In these circumstances new approaches in our political strategy should be found. I would say that we can't succeed without the coordinated support of our diaspora and without the concentration of all our possibilities and efforts...I ask all Crimean Tatar diaspora leaders to think about measures which should be planned."[6]

A similar report from the Crimea during this period claims that "On December 26, 1998, the *Mejlis* of the Crimean Tatar people issued a statement calling on the Crimean Tatar Diaspora to join efforts for the revival of the Crimean Tatar people, restoration of their rights, preservation and development of their culture within the community of cultures."[7] Dr. Hakan Kirimli, a Turkish-Tatar historian and Crimean activist in Turkey wrote at this time "Turkey cannot remain a bystander in view of these developments, as the Turkic elements in Crimea are too important to her interests."[8]

In many ways, the links between the Crimean Tatars in the former Soviet Union and those in Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria can be compared to those linking the Irish and the Irish-Americans or the Armenians and the Armenian diaspora of the USA and Europe. For much of the Russian population of the Crimea, however, this tie is seen as a threatening renewal of the historic Islamic alliance between the Crimean Tatars and Russia's traditional enemy, Islamic Turkey. In this respect, the situation that prevails in the Crimea today is similar to that which existed a hundred ago in the Russian province of the Tauride. The Crimean Tatars' Islamic culture and their links to Turkey are as suspect at the beginning of the 21st century as they were after the Crimean War and there is a feeling among the Crimea's dominant Russian population that the Crimean Tatar presence in the Crimea is a distinct threat to the security of the local Russian population.

Russian nationalists and demagogues, such as Yuri Meshkov (the short-lived Russian secessionist leader of the post-Soviet Autonomous

[6] *Turkistan Newsletter*. Crimea Bulletin. vol. 3:005, January 11, 1999. p. 2.
[7] *Turkistan Newsletter*. vol. 3:019-05-Feb. 1999. p. 11.
[8] Ibid. Hakan Kirimli is also the son of the diasporic Crimean Tatar leader Ahmet Kirimli a former Tourism Minister in the Turkish government.

Republic of the Crimea), touted few threats to the security of the Crimea's Russian community as shrilly as the peril of an unholy alliance between Turkey and the Tatar diaspora of Turkey on the one hand and Turkey's 'Tatar-Muslim agents' operating within the peninsula on the other. A 1994 article on this topic in the popular Russian newspaper *Arguments and Facts (Argumenty i Fakty)* claimed:

> In its program, the *Mejlis* plans to increase the number of Crimean Tatars to that of the Russians. It is not only the Tatars who are interested in this but Turkey which, in its time, gave the Crimea to Russia in an agreement with one stipulation**: it could not be given to a third state**. The Ukraine, for its part, is interested in the existence of the 'Tatar question' in the Crimea as a lever to alter Russian-Ukrainian relations. No one in either the Ukraine or the Crimea notices that this is creating a situation fortuitous **for the formation in the close decades of still another Islamic republic-on the south of the Ukraine itself**. In this situation, Turkey may recall the conditions of the Russian-Turkish agreement. In that case the fate of the Crimea will be that of Cyprus.[9]

Another Russian source touting the potential threat of the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey to the Crimea claims "From the latest information they number close to 2 million and, if one believes the newspapers, they are not far from returning to their 'historical homeland'."[10] In the fall of 1997, Russian General Albert Makashov also made sensationalist use of history (namely the Russian conquest of the Ottoman fortress of Ochakov or Özu, which guarded the approach to the Crimea during the 18th century) to point out the Turkish threat to the Crimea. Makashov claimed "As concerns Turkey. The Turkey of today is not the Turkey of Ochakov. It is a highly organized army of NATO armed with first class weapons. In the time of the Korean War in 1953 there was not one prisoner from the Turkish division. And sooner or later Turkey may remind us of everything, both Ochakov and the Crimea."[11] Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the outspoken Russian ultra-nationalist parliament member whose diatribes have made him notorious in the West has also played upon Russian fears of Turkish intervention in the Crimea on behalf of the Crimean Tatars. Zhirinovsky warned in the winter of 1999 that "12

[9] Viktor Perushkin. "Yplyvet li Krym v Turtsiiu?" *Argumenty i Fakty*. October. 1994. no. 40 (729). p. 6.
[10] P. Landa. *Islam v Istorii Rossii*. Moscow; Vostochnaiia Literatura. 1995. p. 92.
[11] "Kto Seichas Ugrozhaet Rossi." *Argumenty i Fakty*. No. 47. 1997. p. 5.

million Russians are left to the mercy of fate, the true Russian territories are lost, first of all the Crimea which is given not to Kiev, not the Ukraine but to the Turks...Within ten years the Turkish flag will appear in the Crimea."[12] This sort of alarmist theorizing is not limited to Russia and some observers in the West do not underestimate the real potential for Turkish intervention in the Crimea.[13]

As can be seen, the Crimean Tatars and the Russians, both within the Crimea itself and without, appear to take the existence of the Crimean Tatar diaspora of Turkey and Turkey's ties to the Crimea seriously.[14] As shall be demonstrated, the Crimean Tatar diaspora of Turkey has the potential to offer considerable support to its beleaguered kin in the Crimea, but both the fears of the Russians and the expectations of the Crimean Tatars concerning this diaspora's economic, political and especially military potential appear to be exaggerated.

In light of the frequent use of the term 'diaspora' in both Crimean Tatar and Russian sources which refer to the Crimean Tatar population of Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania, a brief explanation of this politically loaded term is necessary. William Safran quantifies the over used term 'diaspora' and provides perhaps the best working definition for this word which has all too often been erroneously applied to *any* ethnic, religious or socio-economic community no longer living on its natal territory. According to Safran, a community must meet the following criteria to be termed a diaspora:

> 1. they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'center' to two or more 'peripheral', or foreign regions.
> 2. they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland-its physical location, history, and achievements.
> 3. they believe that they are not-and perhaps cannot be-fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it.
> 4. they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return-when conditions are appropriate.
> 5. they believe that they should collectively be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity.
> 6. they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by such a relationship.[15]

[12] *Turkistan Newsletter*. Crimea Bulletin. Vol. 30:039 February 26. 1999. p. 7.

[13] Henry Huttenbach for example writes "While officially not interested in Crimea, the region, nevertheless, is seen by some as part of the old Turkish sphere of influence. Were central governments to weaken in Kiev and Moscow; were the Crimean Tatar population to continue its growth and political assertiveness; were the large-scale ethnic confrontations-Slav versus Tatar-to break out with local and state authorities unable or unwilling to curb them, would it be inconceivable to ponder a Cyprus-like Turkish involvement on the side of the Tatars?" Henry Huttenbach. "The Crimean Time-Bomb: Can it be Diffused." *Association for the Study of Nationalities. Analysis of Current Events*. May 1993. Year 4, no. 7. p. 2.

[14] Others have taken a cautionary note when dealing with the existence of a Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey. Oleksandr Piskun states "The myths of the Islamic menace, the Mejlis as the shadow power of an extremist nature, and a massive exodus of Crimean Tatars from Turkey looming on the horizon, harbor vast negative potential for influencing the Ukrainian political elite's orientation." Oleksandr Piskun. "The Crimean Tatar Issue: Current Status and Prospects for Solution." *Krymski Studii*. no. 1. 2000. p. 77.

It will be argued here that, while many members of the Crimean Tatar émigré community in Turkey and the Dobruca did become assimilated over time, there have been Crimean Tatar cultural and political movements in both Turkey and Romania/Bulgaria which have aimed to foster a diaspora mentality, of the sort described by Safran, among the Tatars of these lands. In light of the definition of 'diaspora' generally accepted by Safran and others in diaspora studies, the Crimean Tatars of Anatolia certainly fulfill the requirements of a diasporic group in various historical and geographic contexts. Crimean Tatars have been migrating to Anatolia for centuries and the level of identification with the Crimea as a homeland among the descendants of these migrants has varied according to the historic circumstances surrounding their migrations.

The History of Crimean Tatar Migration to Anatolia

As was the case in the Dobruca, the Crimean Tatars had a long history of migration to Anatolia that began even prior to the Russian conquest of the Crimean Peninsula. As the center of the Sultan's Islamic empire, Istanbul (which straddles European Rumelia and Anatolia) was a natural center of attraction for the Crimean elite. Many Crimean Tatar *mullahs* and *kadis* (Islamic judges) were trained in the *medreses* of Istanbul and the Giray dynasty kept an official residence in the Istanbul suburb of Büyük Dere.

Mengli Giray Khan and his Tatar riders played a key role in his

[15] William Safran. "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora*. vol. 1 no. 1. Spring 1991. p. 83.

son in law, Prince Selim I's attempts to seize the throne from his father Sultan Bayazid II in the 1511 during the Battle of Çorlu and this began a long history of Tatar involvement in internal Ottoman affairs.[16] The Crimean Tatars of Istanbul in particular became very involved in domestic Ottoman politics. During rebellions (such as that led by Patrona Halil), the presence of the Giray Khan in Istanbul was often sufficient to reestablish order.[17] The Tatar cavalry was also used to put down the greatest rebellion in Ottoman history, the Jelali rebellion, which swept Anatolia during the early 17th century.[18] In addition, hardy Tatar horsemen, who were unrivaled for their duration and equine skills, served throughout Anatolia and the Middle East as messengers. The Tatars' name became so closely linked to this duty that the term 'Tatar' came to mean messenger in Ottoman Turkish.

As the Russians and Cossacks expanded onto the steppes of the Ukraine during the 17th and 18th century, the large contingent of Tatars in the Ottoman court were usually allied with the pro-war party in the capital. Living on the dangerous frontier with Russia, the Tatars were aware of the serious nature of the Russian threat to the *Dar al Islam* long before their Ottoman allies. During Peter the Great's invasion of the Ottoman Empire in the 1711 Pruth Campaign, Akdes Kurat claims the Crimean Khan used his considerable influence in Istanbul to muster a campaign which beat back the invading Russians.[19] In the course of the Pruth campaign (the Ottoman Empire's only major victory over Russia in their long history of enmity), it was the Crimean Khan who took control of the battle and used his riders to cut apart the Tsar's armies when the timid Ottoman Grand Vezir, Baltaci Mehemed Pasha, sought to avoid battle.[20]

With the fall of the Crimean Khanate the Crimean Tatar popu-

[16] In this battle Sultan Bayazid's Janissaries defeated Selim's Tatar allies demonstrating their superiority over the Tatars. The defeated Selim retreated back to Kaffa before acquiring the throne in 1512.

[17] V.J. Parry. *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730.* Cambridge; Cambridge University Press. 1976. p. 219.

[18] Carl Max Kortepeter. *Ottoman Imperialism During the Reformation.* New York; New York Univ. Press. 1972. p. 230.

[19] Akdes N. Kurat. *The Despatches of Sir Robert Sutton, Ambassador in Constantinople.* London 1958 pp. 25-28.

[20] Robert Munsie. *Peter the Great, His Life and World.* New York; Alfred Knopf. 1980. p. 556.

lation of Anatolia increased and tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars immigrated to Istanbul where they played the classic role of an exiled lobby group at the sultan's court. The Tatar *ulema*, *mirzas* and Giray clan consistently sought to pressure their Ottoman hosts into liberating the Crimea from infidel rule.[21] Exiled members of the Giray dynasty and other Crimean Tatar nobles later played a major role in inciting war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in the late 18th and early 19th century.[22] This powerful exile community united with the Ottoman *ulema* to determine Ottoman foreign affairs during the final two decades of the 18th century.[23]

With their strong attachment to the Crimea, their dream of returning to this homeland and their lack of assimilation in Ottoman Anatolia, this early wave of Crimean Tatars functioned as an archetypal diaspora in the 18th century Ottoman context. This exile community was bolstered when tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars arrived in the Sultan's domain following the Ottoman recognition of Russian rule in the Crimea with the 1792 Treaty of Jassy. This was, however, the last contingent of Crimean immigrants to bring with them a political attachment to the Crimean homeland.

By the early 19th century the Crimean Tatars of Anatolia had gradually given up their dreams of regaining their former lands and had begun to assimilate into Anatolian Turkish society. By the mid 1800s the bulk of this group had become Turkified and, without an emotional link to a distant homeland and a desire to avoid assimilation by their host society (basic prerequisites for identifying a community as a diasporic group), the majority of the Tatars of Anatolia could no longer be considered a diaspora.

The common Crimean Tatar peasant *muhacirs* who arrived on the shores of the *ak toprak* in the Great Migration of 1860-61 carried a different notion of homeland with them than that carried by the

[21] Of these immigrants Fisher writes "Within the Ottoman Empire, the Crimean Tatars continuously pressed for Ottoman support for their return 'to their homeland' and did not seem to be easily assimilated into Ottoman society." Alan Fisher. "Crimean Separatism in the Ottoman Empire." *Nationalism in a Non-National State. The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.* Columbus; Ohio State University Press. 1977. p. 73.

[22] Virginia Aksan. *An Ottoman Statesman in War and Peace. Ahmed Resmi Effendi, 1700 to 1783.* Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1995. pp. 160-161.

[23] Virginia Aksan. "The 1768-1774 Russo-Turkish War: A Comparative Analysis of Russian and Ottoman Campaign Preparedness." *Turkish Studies Bulletin.* April 1992. vol. 16, no. 1. p. 24.

earlier exiles from the Crimea (many of whom were from the elite) who had previously identified with the land on the basis of their political claims to this territory. These simple Muslim peasants were leaving the Russian Empire for the land of Caliph, an imagined homeland, and had no links to the Crimea in political terms. By all accounts this wave, which did not bring the sort of capital with it to Anatolia that the earlier immigrants had before them, faced difficulties in settling in this region that resembled those problems faced by their kin in the Dobruca.

In his work entitled *The Crimean Tragedy Under the Tsarist Regime, or the Tatar Hijra (Çarlık Hakimiyetinde Kırım Faciası Yahut Tatar Hicretleri)*, the Crimean Tatar leader Ahmet Özenbaşlı details the problems the Tatars encountered upon arrival in the Ottoman Empire.[24] According to this source, many of the immigrants had difficulties in adapting in socio-economic terms to the conditions of the Anatolian plateau which differed considerably from the Crimean steppe, coast and mountains.[25] Many Tatars who settled in unhealthy valleys and plains in Anatolia died from epidemics, such as malaria and cholera. Thousands of Nogai Tatars who settled in the Jeihun valley in south-eastern Turkey, for example, died of malaria and only a remnant survived in this area.[26]

As in the Dobruca, the well-intentioned Ottoman authorities in Anatolia appear to have been overwhelmed by the sheer size of the Crimean Tatar immigration which became compounded by that of the Circassians who arrived in even greater numbers.[27] From Black Sea port cities, such as Samsun, Trebizond and Istanbul, the Crimean Tatar *muhacirs* were dispatched to lands in western and southern Anatolia that had lost much of their populations due to rebellions and mass civil wars in the previous centuries. Many of these lands in the Anatolian plateau were unsuited to the Tatars' herding and

[24] This historian was the son of Seyid Abdullah Özenbaşlı, one the earliest Crimean Tatar nationalists and assistant to the great Crimean Tatar reformer Ismail Gasprinsky.

[25] Ahmet Özenbaşlı. *Çarlık Hakimiyetinde Kırım Faciası Yahut Tatar Hicretleri.* Akmecit. 1925. pp. 101-104.

[26] Leon Dominion. *The Frontiers of Language and Nationality in Europe.* New York; American Geographical Society. 1917. p. 283.

[27] In the year 1860, for example, 30,000 Crimean Tatars arrived in Istanbul. Mark Pinson. "Ottoman Colonization of the Crimean Tatars in Bulgaria, 1854-1862." *Türk Tarih Kongresi.* VII. vol. 2. Ankara; Kongreye Sununlari Bildirler. 1973. p. 1047.

farming traditions and thousands of Tatars met a sad fate in the cherished 'white soil' of Anatolia. From Russia comes an account that captures some of the horrors of the Tatars' subsequent settlement in Anatolia:

> Soon sickness appeared among them. Cholera and malaria took away thousands. In the course of the first three months close to 10,000 people died. Many children in particular died. Many settlers were driven to desperation, and some even to suicide. In the eyes of all there were terrible scenes. From exhaustion the migrants fell on the streets and died. Others, making their way to the plots allotted to them, fell on the large roads and lay next to the bodies of fallen animals.[28]

Many Crimean Tatars who were disillusioned with conditions in this imagined homeland began to petition Russian consuls in Anatolia to allow them to return to the Crimea. In the city of Trebizond desperate Crimean Tatars demonstrated outside the Russian consul's residence demanding the right to return to the Crimea.[29] As many as 10,000 Tatars did in fact return to the Russian Empire only after they had signed contracts with Russian *pomeshchiks* which bound them to greater duties than they had known previously in the Crimea.

Those that remained and survived in the *ak toprak* of Anatolia were too dispersed over this vast plateau land to maintain the same sense of traditional community awareness that was sustained among the compactly settled Tatars of the smaller territory of the Dobruca.[30] While the scattered Tatar communities of Anatolia did continue many of their Crimean traditions in this new homeland, they became largely Turkified in this new environment after one or two generations. Although many Tatar settlers have maintained traditions of endogamy to this day, most lost their language and sense of attachment to their former homeland by the early 20th century.

There was among these Crimean Muslim immigrants in Ottoman Anatolia little incentive for maintaining their ethnic identity in a time and milieu where there was no sense of nation or national homeland. Unlike their nationalist descendants in the USSR who fought a vigorous half century struggle to maintain their national identity

[28] B.M. Vol'fson. "Emigratsiia Krymskikh Tatar v 1860 g." *Istoricheskie Zapiski.* no. 9. 1940. p. 191.

[29] Ibid.

[30] This may have been an intentional result of Ottoman settlement policies in the region which aimed to break up ethnic enclaves and tribal sources of non-governmental, traditional authority among immigrant groups. Kemal Karpat. op. cit. no. 1. p. 76.

in the Soviet-imposed exile, these 19th century, religiously-defined Crimean Muslims sought assimilation in their new environment. Many Nogais were ashamed of their provincial Kipchak Tatar dialect and sought to learn more cultured *Osmanli* (Ottoman-Oghuz) Turkish. It was only in the vicinity of Eski Şehir (Old Town) in Western Anatolia that the Crimean Tatar immigrants were able to settle in a cluster of villages and maintain some of their Crimean Tatar identity and a vague (non-political) attachment to their old homeland and its customs. The vast majority of immigrants to Anatolia simply became assimilated among the fellow Muslim members of their pre-national, imagined community, the *umma*. In most instances, the 19th Crimean immigrants' descendants in Turkey today have as much real links to their former homeland as the average citizen of the USA who can claim German, English, or African descent and thus cannot be considered a diaspora.

The Bulgarian and Romanian Uprisings of 1876-78 and the Tatar Emigration to Anatolia

In addition to the direct migrations to Anatolia from the Crimea, a wave of Crimean Tatars arrived in Anatolia from the Balkans between 1876-79 following the collapse of Ottoman authority in Romania and Bulgaria. While many in the West became aware of the existence of persecuted Balkan Muslim groups in the Balkans only with the advent of the post-Yugoslav, Bosnian War and large scale expulsion of Albanians in Kosovo in 1999, the "ethnic cleansing" of Muslim groups from this region actually has a long and tragic history. With the retreat of the Ottoman Empire from Serbia and Greece during the early 19th century, tens of thousands of Muslim Turks and Pomaks (Bulgarian Muslims) were massacred or expelled by their Christian neighbors and these new Balkan states cleansed their Muslim populations in just a few years.

No event, however, destroyed the old mixed Muslim-Christian nature of the heterogeneous Balkans to the same degree as the Romanian and Bulgarian uprisings of 1876-78 and the subsequent Russian invasion of the Ottoman Empire in support of these insurrections. The uprisings began in May of 1876 and were timed to coincide with an insurrection already taking place in the Ottoman province of Bosnia-Hercegovina. During the initial stages of the

rebellion, Muslim villages were destroyed (including Circassian hamlets) and Muslims slaughtered throughout the region.[31] A Bulgarian leader, George Benkovski began the rebellion with the cry of "Forward, forward brothers, God is with us" and, as L.S. Stavrianos wryly recounts in his history of the Balkans "The excited populace assembled in the square, sang revolutionary songs, heard flaming speeches by Benkovski, and then scattered to kill peaceable Turks wherever they could be found."[32]

As the Ottoman army was already involved in suppressing the Bosnian uprising, desperate Ottoman officials in the region hit upon the idea of arming the large Balkan Circassian population and using this warlike element to crush the rebellion. In the ensuing bloodshed, the rapacious Circassian *başi bazouks* (irregulars) not only retaliated for the attacks on their community but randomly attacked Bulgarian villages. The Circassians, appear to have considered their orders from the Ottoman government to be a license to engage in their timeless pursuit of warfare against their traditional enemies, the Slavic Christians. Between 12,000 and 15,000 Christians were killed by the Circassian *başi-bazouks* and consuls from Christian countries in the region quickly spread news of the destruction to the West.[33]

When news of the retaliatory massacre of Bulgarians reached the Christian West, even the Ottomans' defenders during the Crimean War, Britain and France, turned on their former ally. Sensing the reluctance of Britain to involve herself in defending its former Ottoman allies as a result of the "Bulgarian Horrors" (news of which was widely exaggerated in England by the former British Prime Minister William Gladstone), the Russian government decided the moment was ripe to avenge its humiliating loss in the Crimean War and simultaneously support the liberation movement of its Balkan Christian 'brothers and sisters'.

In 1877, Russia invaded the Ottoman Empire and actively supported the Bulgarian and Romanian rebel forces. After the fall of the Ottoman fortress-town of Plevna in Bulgaria following a heroic 5 month defense, Ottoman authority in Bulgaria and Romania

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[31] Justin McCarthy. *Death and Exile. The Cleansing of the Ottoman Muslim, 1821-1922*. Princeton; Darwin Press. 1995. p. 60.

[32] L.S. Stavrianos. *The Balkans Since 1453*. New York; Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. 1958. p. 379.

[33] Ibid. p. 380-389.

collapsed and the victorious Russian, Bulgarian and Romanian forces went on a killing spree that was to change the demography of the Balkans forever. According to McCarthy "The result was a massacre of Muslims in 1877-79 much greater than any massacre of Bulgarians in 1876."[34]

While the Tatars of the Dobruca had been "generally well accepted" by their Bulgarian and Romanian neighbors prior to this uprising (in marked contrast to the Circassian freebooters with whom uninformed Westerners often linked them), the distinction between Muslims who had previously acted as protectors and those who had not was lost in the ensuing blood-letting.[35] While none could doubt that the peasants of Bulgaria and Romania (including the large Muslim peasant population of these lands) had suffered from Ottoman misrule in the 19th century, few could have foreseen that the entire Muslim population of Bulgaria and Romania would become the target of mass ethnic cleansing. The Bulgarian and Romanian nationalist cleansers, whose ilk have similarly attempted to eradicate unwanted Muslim populations in Serbian-dominated parts of Bosnia and in Kosovo province, aimed to rid these lands of a population that did not fit their plans for the creation of homogenous ("pure" in Balkan euphemism) nation states.

A contemporary report from the British ambassador to Istanbul makes it clear that nationalist violence in the Balkans and Russian efforts to eradicate the Muslim presence in this region had forever destroyed the timeless patterns of co-existence between Christians and Muslims (who had often shared villages and fields for centuries) in this region:

> It cannot be repeated too often that the Turkish population of the invaded provinces has not shown hostility, except in rare instances, to the Bulgarians but has, on the contrary, protected them as far as it was able against the excesses of the Cossacks and other marauders. The two populations have hitherto lived peaceably together and would do so, I doubt not, in the future, if foreign intrigues were not employed to excite political discontent...The Turkish Government has suspected from the first that Russia has the deliberate design of exterminating, or driving out, from Bulgaria and a great part of Roumelia the whole

[34] Justin McCarthy. op. cit. no. 31. p. 64.

[35] Alan Fisher. "Emigration of the Muslims from the Russian Empire in the Years After the Crimean War." *Jahrucher fur Geschichte Ost Europas*. vol. 35. no. 3. 1987. p. 368.

> of the Turkish population. It has been confirmed in that suspicion by the slaughter of Mussulmans in the invaded districts, and by the proceedings of the Russian civil administration at Tirnovo which has confiscated their lands.[36]

As horrified Western consuls and observers began to receive reports from the Russian occupied areas of Romania and Bulgaria they began to realize that the Russians, with backing of the Bulgarians in particular, were engaged in nothing less than the wholesale destruction of the Muslim community that had lived in this land for half a millennium. The following report sent to the British Foreign Secretary is typical in its sanitized description of the tragedy that was unfolding in scores of Muslim villages throughout Bulgaria and Romania in 1877. "A number of Mussulman refugees flying from the Russians have been massacred in cold blood by Bulgarians in the gorge of Kain Boghaz, between Tirnovo and Kazanlik. The refugees thus murdered included women and children."[37]

The Crimean Tatars' old nemesis from the Crimea, the Cossacks, appear to have played a particularly active role in the destruction of Muslim villages in Romania and Bulgaria at this time. The following first hand accounts of the Cossacks' supporting role in the destruction of Muslim peasant communities in Bulgaria is typical of the reports that made their way to an unmoved England at this time:

> In the village of Hidibey, Cossacks peacefully took the arms of Turkish villagers and gave them to the Bulgarians, who then killed all but 15 of the 70 Turkish males of the village, while the Cossacks made sure that none escaped.
>
> The Cossacks 'cordoned off' the town (of Büklümlük) to prevent escape. The Bulgarians put all the men in a straw barn and all the women in houses. The barn and houses were piled with straw and set afire. Those who ran from the buildings were shot by the Bulgarians.[38]

In the ensuing blood-letting more than a quarter of a million Muslims in the Balkans were killed by Bulgarian, Romanian and Russian forces, a lopsided retaliation for the earlier death of 15,000 Christians at the hands of Circassian irregulars.[39] The loss of Mus-

[36] *(British) Foreign Office Archives (Public Records Office)*. F.O. 424/60. Confidential. (3384). p. 33. no. 63.

[37] *Foreign Office Archives (Public Record Office)*. F.O. 424/57. p. 129. no. 248.

[38] Justin McCarthy. op. cit. no. 31. p. 68-69.

[39] Kemal Karpat. op. cit. no. 1. p. 75. Ironically the Circassians, who were responsible for crushing the Bulgarian rebellion were, for the most part, able to

lim lives on this massive scale appears to have had as little of an impact on the West's conscience at this time as the tragic cleansing of thousands of Bosnian Muslims by Serbian forces had in the recent Bosnian War. In addition, McCarthy claims "In less than three years, from 1877 to 1879, perhaps a million Bulgarian Muslims were driven from their homes, many of whom were Circassians and Tatars previously exiled from Russia."[40] While historians in the West have long used the term genocide to refer to the brutal expulsion and slaughter perpetuated against Armenians by the Ottoman government in 1915, the extermination of Muslims in Eastern Europe 40 years earlier deserves the term no less.

In July of 1877, the Ottoman forces withdrew from the Dobruca and "Bulgarian brigands" began to massacre the Muslims of this region.[41] In a report from Shumnu in Bulgaria, an Ottoman *serasker* (military commander) reported the departure of Tatars from the Dobruca region in that very month in the face of pressure from the Bulgarians.[42] An Ottoman authority in the city of Shumla further mentioned that the atrocities extended to the Jewish population of the region.[43]

While it is hard to trace the migration of this small people from the Dobruca to Anatolia in the general conflagration that saw the collapse of the Ottoman Empire's centuries long rule in this region and expulsion of a million Muslims, a general picture of this population movement can be reconstructed.

The 1877-79 Tatar Settlement of Anatolia

While many Muslim villages were destroyed in Bulgaria, the destruction in the north-eastern sections of the land (including Dobruca) was not as widespread. Many Tatars in Bulgaria and the Dobruca had, however, certainly lost their lives in the strife and others had been expelled from their villages during the Russian invasion.[44] Those that

escape from Rumelia to Anatolia before the rebellion, largely as a result of the unsettled nature of their society.

[40] Justin McCarthy. op. cit. no. 31. p. 90.

[41] Bilal Şimşir. ed. *Turkish Emigrations from the Balkans. Documents. vol. 1. A Turkish Exodus, 1877-1878.* Ankara; Turkish Historical Society. 1989. p. 128.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] French authorities claim that those Turks and Tatars who tried to return to their homes in the Dobrucan town of Tulcea (northern Dobruca) were prevented from doing so by the local Bulgarian authorities. Ibid. p. 612.

remained in the Dobruca and elsewhere after the war and subsequent Treaty of Berlin which gave most of the Dobruca to Romania found themselves in a precarious position, for it was clear that the new Bulgarian and Romanian states were to have no room for Muslim communities that did not belong to the new, implicitly Christian nation states.

As many devastated Dobrucan Tatars began to abandon their newly settled homeland, British observers reported the arrival of hundreds of Tatars from Tulcea at the port of Kavalla in Thrace in September of 1877.[45] In the general chaos surrounding this migration, Tatar communities were broken up and their members, who had previously managed to keep their village communes from the Crimea together, were often scattered throughout the sultan's remaining domains.[46]

While there is little ambiguity concerning the motives for the Crimean Tatar emigration from the Dobruca region to the safety of Anatolia in the aftermath of the pogroms of 1877-78, it should be noted that, as in the case of the migrations from the Crimea in 1860, internal factors also operated in the Crimean Tatar migration of 1877-78 from Dobruca to Anatolia. After the formation of the Christian state of Bulgaria (which was still nominally dependent on the Ottoman Empire) and Romania, Ülküsal claims that Muslim *hojas* (teachers) declared that it was the Muslims' duty to renounce living in the land of the unbelievers and "for this reason it was the Turks' duty to partake in *hijra* to the *ak toprak* of Turkey."[47]

Mosques and *medreses* had, according to one account, been destroyed "in the hundreds" in Bulgaria, and many Crimean Tatar *muhacirs* who had arrived in this land from the Russian Empire would have again found their Muslim identity under assault in the new anti-

[45] These refugees appear to have received a hospitable reception from the local Muslim population. *Foreign Office Archives.* F.O. 424/60. Confidential (3384). p. 198. no. 336/1.

[46] One group of Tatars even appears to have been caught up with the large Circassian contingent that was settled in Syria, Palestine and Jordan by the Ottoman authorities according to a British report. *Foreign Office Archives.* F.O. 424/69. Confidential. (3625). p. 163. no. 279/1.

[47] Müstecib Ülküsal. *Dobruca ve Türkler.* Ankara; Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü. 1966. p. 29.

Muslim environment prevailing in Bulgaria and Romania.[48] A Turkish source claims that the older generation referred to this migration from the Balkans as a *hijra* and, using the Muslim calendar to date their flight from Bulgaria and Romania, called their emigration the *doksan üç muhacereti* (the migration of '93).[49]

As Christian settlers began to move into the Dobruca, and into the houses abandoned by the Muslim expellees, many of the remaining Tatars and Turks began to emigrate from the Dobruca to Anatolia. All told, somewhere between 80,000 and 90,000 Turks and Tatars abandoned Dobruca during the '93 migration. In neighboring Thrace, Macedonia and Bulgaria proper "very few" villages inhabited by the Tatars remained.[50] While it is hard to provide a precise statistic for the size of this Tatar emigration (the collapsing Ottoman regime kept no statistics on the number of refugees pouring into Istanbul from their devastated Balkan villages), Karpat claims "a large number" of Tatars emigrated from the Dobruca, and in particular, from the northern parts of this land.[51] Etham Gözaydin states simply that "the majority" of Crimean Tatars quitted the Dobruca in 1877.[52]

Most emigrants followed the route of the Tatars and Turks whose villages had been destroyed in the outset of the rebellion and migrated southward towards the port of Varna, or to the cities of Shumnu and Pravadi (in Bulgaria). These emigrants then made their way towards Edirne and from there to the cities of Western Anatolia, such as Bursa, Eski Şehir, Ankara, Izmir, Adana and Konya.

Just as the Jews, Palestinians and other victims of mass expulsion were to do with their "village books", the Tatar refugees, however, kept the memories of their former places and the rich history associated with them alive in their new homeland and often named their new villages after their old ones in Bulgaria and the Dobruca. For 20th century Tatar historians, such as Ülküsal Bey, the meticulous recording of scores of villages lost during the migration of 1877-79 was an important step in preserving the memory of the lost world of the Balkan Tatars and Turks.[53]

[48] Bilal Şimşir. *Bulgaristan Türkleri (1878-1985)*. Ankara; Bigli Yayinevi. 1986. p. 33.
[49] Ibid. p. 48.
[50] Ibid. p. 25.
[51] Kemal Karpat. op. cit. no. 1. p. 66.
[52] Etham Gözaydin. *Kırım. Kırım Türklerinin Yerleşme ve Göçmeleri*. Istanbul; Vakit Matbaasi. 1949. p. 97.
[53] Ibid p. 26.

The Turks of Anatolia were to call these emigrants from the lost Muslim villages of the Balkans, a land ruled by the Ottoman sultans since even before Mehmed the Conqueror's conquest of Constantinople, the *Evlad-i Fatih Han*, or 'The Children of Mehmed Khan'. Today there are millions of *Evlad-i Fatih Han* "Turks" in Turkey who have historical ties to villages in Serbia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Romania and Greece that have long since lost their old Muslim names, mosques, bazaars, *khans* (inns) and other historic and cultural ties to the lost Muslim Empire of the Ottoman sultans.[54]

The Tats and Nogai Tatars in Anatolia

Inhabiting a land built on mixing and emigration, Anatolians were generally accepting of fellow Muslims from the lost lands of the *Dar al-Islam*. In the 1870s hundreds of thousands of Balkan Muslims were encouraged to emigrate to the lands of the shrinking Ottoman Empire by Sultan Abdül Hamid II (1876-1909) as part of this ruler's program which aimed to forge an Ottoman-Islamic nation which made no room for smaller ethnic divisions. This astute ruler sought to forge a Muslim nation on the pattern of nations then being created in Europe and he consciously promoted an Islamicist policy designed to emphasis his subjects' shared loyalty to an Islamically-defined Ottoman *vatan* (homeland). Ethnic identity meant little in this multi-ethnic Islamic empire that had long divided populations into *millets* (religiously defined communities) and the Muslim Albanians, Turks, Circassians, Arabs, Kurds and Tatars had yet to identify themselves as nations in the secular Western sense.

The Ottoman state actively sought to assimilate migrants and create devotion to the sultan in his capacity as holder of the *Hilafet ul-Kubra* (Highest Caliphate) through its statewide school system of *rüşdiyes* (middle schools), the army, and propaganda. In many ways the Crimean *muhacirs* identified with this proto-national Islamic state building process and lost their already weak sense of Tatar ethnic identity. There was a certain sense of Islamic extra-territoriality among these early immigrants to the Ottoman Empire that compares

[54] It is not uncommon to find many Turks today possessing blond hair and blue eyes which betray Caucasian or Slavic origins, or Tatar or Greek complexions.

drastically with the deeply imbedded sense of territorialized identity found among their nationalistic descendants in the former Soviet Union who waged a bitter struggle to return to a territory defined in secular terms as the Crimean 'fatherland.'

In time, the 19th century Tatar settlers of western Anatolia appear to have overcome the difficulties associated with their traumatic uprooting (this migration, in comparison to that from the Crimea, can more clearly be defined as an expulsion) which came so soon after their earlier departure from Russia and they seem to have adapted to their Anatolian environment.[55] This process of adapting to Anatolia was certainly facilitated by the existence of Crimean Tatar communities in this region from previous periods.[56] Nogais from the Dobruca, for example, settled among pre-existing communities of Nogais that had established themselves in the region of Tuz Gölü (southern Anatolia, between Konya and Ankara) in 1858 and 1859.[57]

One can still find tales of the 1878 migration and settlement of Anatolia among the Turkified Tatar villages of this region and many a village in western Anatolia owes its founding to this event. The following account of the establishment of Tırnaksız is typical of the village founding legends of the Anatolian Tatars:

> From villages in the Crimea, Constanta in Romania, the Pazarcık vicinity in Bulgaria and the surrounding villages, Haci Bavbek, Haci Hatip, Osman Balci, Ali Altay and Yusuf Sezigener *ağas* and several other *muhacirs* came to Turkey, settled down and set up a village...In Anatolia, the Crimean Tatars established many such villages with care and tidiness, and with white-washed houses which were built with careful attention. From distant places Tırnaksız village was established on a place near the Sakarya river, but in spite of this, it was unfortunately devoid of greenery and remained treeless.[58]

It is interesting to note by way of comparison that, while carrying out interviews in Israel with that country's small Circassian minority, I discovered similar traditions concerning the 1878 migration

[55] Gözaydin. op. cit. no 52. p. 42. Gözaydin claims that many of this "intelligent and industrious people" went onto become professionals and there are in Turkey today many professors, authors and editors of Crimean Tatar descent.

[56] Ottoman records, for example, show that, in addition to the 8-10 villages allotted to the Tatars in the Eski Şehir region in 1860, an additional 14 were added in 1878. Peter Andrews. *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey*. Weisbaden; Dr. Ludwig Verlag. 1989. p. 87.

[57] Ibid. p. 444.

[58] Hamdi Bayar and Namik Kemal Bayar. "Sakarya (Tırnaksız) Köyu." *Emel*. September-October. 1993. p. 35.

among Circassian villagers whose Caucasian ancestors were settled by Ottoman authorities in the Galilee region of Palestine in 1878. A village elder informed me that "In 1878 our people migrated to the village of Kafr Kama as a result of wars and persecution against Muslims in Bulgaria, Romania, and Russia. The Sultan gave us this land and here we managed to stay together and keep up our old ways."[59]

In dozens of small villages scattered throughout the Ottoman Empire, such as Kafr Kama and Tırnaksız, the Circassian, Tatar, Turkish, Pomak, Bosnian, Greek Muslim and Albanian refugees from the Balkans kept much of their conservative Islamic traditions alive even as they adapted the ways of the surrounding populations. The Kipchak-Turkic speaking Nogais, in particular, appear to have maintained many of their traditional customs and aspects of their identity alive in Anatolia. The Anatolian Nogais continued to identify themselves as belonging to the Yedisan or Djambulaq Nogai Hordes or by their descent from such tribes as the Mangit or Toktamiş in their new environment.[60]

The Nogais who settled in the Konya plain, which they felt resembled their former homeland in the Kuban and Stavropol region of Russia, were able to maintain the semi-nomadic way of life they had lived in Russia (migrating from their homes only in the summer). This group continued to ride horses and maintain a semi-nomadic existence similar to that of their *Yörük* (Turkish nomad) neighbors in this undeveloped region up until the 1960s. Concerning their relations with the Kurds and Turks in Anatolia, Andrews claims that the Nogais, who were distinguished by their Altaic-Mongol features, practiced (and continue to practice) endogamy, with up to 80% of their marriages being within the village and the remainder taking place among Tatars of Tat descent or other Kipchak speaking peoples from Russia (such as Kazakhs).[61]

Not surprisingly, in Anatolia, as in the Dobruca and the Crimea, the distinctions between the Nogai herders and Tats from the southern Crimea continued to exist. According to Andrews the latter considered the Nogais "primitive nomads, and eaters of horseflesh"

[59] Interview Kafr Kama. Israel. Summer 1996. The Circassians rarely intermarry with the surrounding Arabs and never with the Jews, although they are one of the rare Muslim groups in Israel trusted enough to fight in the Israeli army.

[60] Peter Andrews. op. cit. no. 56. p. 87.

[61] Ibid. p. 445.

and avoided contact with these as late as the 1930s.[62] This continued division between the Crimean Tatar sub-ethnies was also seen in the existence of a student organization in Istanbul founded in the first decade of the 20th century which aimed to preserve the language, folkways and traditions of the Nogais.[63] This and other Tatar organizations in Turkey "sought to preserve a vaguely defined 'Tatar' communal solidarity and cultural consciousness (stemming practically from the traditional Muslim folk culture of the Crimea) among the former immigrants in Ottoman Turkey" but had little political orientation or real link to the former Crimean homeland.[64]

For their part the Crimean Tatars from the southern Crimea of Tat descent, who were much closer to the Turks in appearance and culture, blended into Anatolian Turkish society much easier than their former Nogai neighbors. Of these Tat-Tatar settlers, Andrews writes "In their appearance, the Crimeans are not strikingly Mongoloid, but rather varied, including some with blond hair and blue eyes."[65]

While the south Crimean Tatars initially had considerable trouble in adapting to their new Anatolian homeland in economic terms (this group often experienced an initial decline in material development) they, and the Nogais, eventually made a considerable contribution to the development of western Anatolia. The Nogais, for example, were the first people in Anatolia to utilize iron plows, teams of horses, and four wheeled wagons in their development of the region. As in the Dobruca and Crimea, the Tatars of Anatolia were considered to be an industrious farming people and it is generally recognized that wheat cultivation in this part of Anatolia-which is the known as the 'wheat basket' of Turkey-was developed by the Tatars.[66]

Crimean Tatar Diaspora Identity in Turkey to 1991

While the majority of Crimean Tatars did assimilate to a certain extent in Ottoman Anatolia by the early 20th century, a small minority was kept in contact with their former homeland by the rising number of Crimean Tatar students from the Crimea who came to Istanbul to study on the eve of World War I. There was a considerable Crimean Tatar student population in Istanbul when the Young Turks deposed Sultan Abdül Hamid in 1908/9. Many of these Crimean Tatar students in Istanbul became caught up in this revolutionary reform movement in Turkey and began contemplating a similar struggle against the old order (the conservative *mullahs* in particular) in their own homeland.

The idealistic Crimean Tatar students in Istanbul organized the *Kırım Telebi Cemiyeti* (the Union of Crimean Students) with Numan Çelebi Cihan (1885-1918) and Cafer Seydahmet (1889-1960) as its leaders. As the Crimean Tatar students increasingly came to adopt the Young Turks' acceptance of Turkish or Pan-Turkic ethnicity as a basis for the forming of a nation (and their rejection of Sultan Abdül Hamid's Pan-Islamism and earlier *Tanzimat* era Ottomanism) they began to think of their own people in ethno-political terms. From this cabal of revolutionary students in Istanbul arose the Young Tatar movement which laid the foundation for the revolutionary *Vatan* (Homeland) movement in the Crimea.

The reform movement and later nationalist struggle being carried out by their parent community in the old homeland certainly had an impact on the more educated (and perhaps less assimilated) Turkified Crimean Tatars of Turkey and many became involved in the struggle to forge a Crimean Tatar state in the Crimea. There were in Turkey at this time, for example, two diaspora newspapers, *Tonguç* (First Born) and *Çolpan* (Venus) devoted to affairs in the Crimea. In addition, many sons and grandsons of Crimean emigrants to Turkey returned to the Crimea in the first decade of the 20th century to teach in the New Method schools developed by the Crimean Tatar educational reformer Ismail Gasprinsky.[67] The importance of Tatar teachers from Turkey in reforming the out-dated Islamic school system of the Crimea cannot be overestimated and, by the time of the Russian revolution, the majority of reformed schools in the Crimea were taught by Tatars from the Turkish diaspora.

Perhaps the most well known example of a Crimean Tatar de-

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[62] Ibid. pp. 445-446.
[63] Hakan Kirimli. *National Movements and National Identity Among the Crimean Tatars.* Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1996. p. 162.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Peter Andrews. op. cit. no. 56. p. 449.
[66] Karpat. op. cit. no. 1. p. 76.
[67] Most of these Tatars returning to the Crimea from Turkey appear to have retained their Crimean Tatar language and knowledge of Crimean Tatar folkways. Kirimli. op. cit. no. 63. p. 152.

scended from the earlier *muhacirs* (religious migrants) to Turkey to participate in the Crimean Tatars' renewal and nationalist struggle was the renowned Crimean Tatar author Şevki Bektöre. Bektöre was born in the village of Kavaklar in Dobruca in 1888 and subsequently emigrated to Turkey with his family. In 1917, Bektöre became involved with the Crimean Tatar nationalist circles in Turkey and migrated with his wife and 50 other Crimean Tatar teachers from Turkey to teach in the Tatar schools of the Crimean homeland.

Bektöre and many other Crimean Tatar nationalists from Turkey were not, however, trusted by the Soviet government after it seized power in the Crimea in 1920 and soon thereafter most of the émigrés from Turkey, including Bektöre, were arrested and exiled to Siberia and Central Asia. While many of these idealistic repatriates to the Crimean homeland disappeared in the Stalinist purges, Bektöre went on to write some of the Crimean Tatars' most loved poems, such as *Tuvgan Til* (Mother Tongue), *Zavalli Milletime* (To My Poor People), and most importantly, *Tatarliğim* (My Tatarness) from his place of exile in Central Asia (where he was sadly to be later joined by his entire people).[68] Seyit Kirimca writes "Shevki Bektöre paradoxically lived in one of the regions to which the Soviet government and the Communist sent the 1944 generation of displaced Crimean Tatar persons. In a sense, he and his song, 'My Tatarness' welcomed the new wave of exiles from Crimea to Central Asia."[69]

While the activities of Bektöre and other Tatar repatriates to the Crimean homeland were largely educational, many Crimean Tatars in Istanbul were involved in distinctly political activities. After the fall of the absolutist rule of Sultan Abdül Hamid in 1909 the Crimean Tatar nationalists of Istanbul had unrestrained freedom to plot the 'liberation' of their homeland. It is doubtful if these early Crimean Tatar nationalists could have developed their ideas, programs and organizational unity in the Crimea at this early period when police surveillance in the Russian Empire was pervasive and the influence of political Pan-Turkism less pronounced. For this diasporic group, the Ottoman capital acted as a protected haven for the fomenting

[68] Mubeyyin Batu Altan. "Şevki Bektöre (1888-1961)." *The Crimean Review*. Vol. 3. no. 2. December 18, 1988. p. 5.

[69] Seyit Kirmca. "The National Anthem and Patriotic Songs by Three Poets." *The Tatars of the Crimea. Return to the Homeland*. Durham; Duke University Press. 1998. pp. 71-83.

of a revolution which aimed to seize power in the Crimea.[70]

As World War I broke out, the Crimean Tatar nationalists, such as Numan Çelebi Cihan, who sought to establish a Crimean state received support from the Young Turk government through the informal 'Committee for the Defense of Turco-Tatars in Russia.' They also sought the participation of Crimean Tatars in Turkey in their struggle for independence from Russia. But the dreams of the Young Turk Committee for Union and Progress and Crimean Tatars of forging a Tatar state allied to the Ottoman Empire were crushed in 1918 by the Bolsheviks.

Members of the defeated Crimean Tatar government subsequently fled from the Crimea to Turkey where they continued their struggle to liberate their nation. In Turkey, Cafer Seydahmet and his cohorts continued for a short time to receive the support of Pan-Turkist leaders of the Young Turk government, such as Enver Pasha, who were eager to assist their 'Crimean Turkish' brothers in establishing an allied Turkic state in the Crimea. This ended shortly after with the defeat of the Ottomans. It should also be noted that representatives of the Crimean Tatar community in Turkey were sent to join a delegation of non-Russian minorities of the Russian Empire which presented an appeal for independence to US President Woodrow Wilson in 1916.[71]

With the victory of the Bolsheviks in the Crimea, the exiled Crimean Tatar Minister of War, Cafer Seydahmet, continued a long struggle in Turkey and the West on behalf of his people. During the terrible famine which swept the Crimea in 1921-22, for example, Seydahmet lobbied Turkey, the Red Cross and the Vatican with the aim of acquiring assistance for his countrymen. Cafer Seydahmet, who was militantly anti-Communist, also led the Crimean Tatar diaspora of Turkey until his death in 1960. In Turkey he worked closely with such Crimean Tatar nationalists as Edige Kirimal and Müstecip Ulküsal who later played a key role in attempting to liberate the Crimean Tatars during World War II.

The period of diasporic nationalist activity on the soil of Turkey,

[70] Istanbul at this time has been described as a "mecca" for pan-Turkist activity and Turkic students and émigrés from throughout Russia flocked to the Ottoman capital. Edward Lazzerini. *Ismail Bey Gasprinsky and Muslim Modernism in Russia, 1878-1914*. Dissertation, Department of History. University of Washington. 1973. p. 131. It is hoped Lazzerini's seminal work will be published soon.

[71] Akdes Kurat. *Turkiye ve Rusya*. Ankara; Ankara University. 1970 p. 508.

however, came to an abrupt end with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. Unlike its Balkan neighbors, Kemalist Turkey followed a foreign policy characterized by the slogan 'Peace at Home, Peace Abroad' *(Yurtta Sulh, Cihanda Sulh)* and it had little interest in making irredentist claims against its neighbors (the minor cases of the Turkish Alexandretta-Iskenderum region in northern Syria and the Kurdish Mosul district in northern Iraq being the only exceptions). Ataturk felt that too much Turkish blood had been spent on the costly foreign policy of his Young Turk predecessors and Republican Turkey's foreign ventures in the 20th century were limited to the invasion of northern Cyprus in 1974.[72]

With the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, a Turkish nation state on the ruins of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire (which had never been a Turkish empire in the ethnic sense *per se*, rather it was an Islamic empire), President Ataturk sought to forge a united Turkish nation on the soil of a land that was far from homogenous or developed in the national sense. The Turks and other Islamic peoples of Anatolia were the last people in the Islamic Ottoman Empire to begin to identify themselves on the basis of their ethno-national identity and Ataturk had a difficult task in breaking down the traditional identification with Islam among the conservative Turks, Kurds, Laz, Circassians, Tatars etc. of Anatolia and Turkey's small Thracian foothold in Europe.[73]

The new Turkish secularist nation state, which was to function as one of the most effective melting pots in the 20th century, did not recognize the diverse ethnic background of Muslim peoples from the Balkans or Russia (or the nationally undeveloped identity of indigenous Muslims, such as the Kurds who were labeled 'Mountain Turks' during the Republican period). As opposed to the Soviet Union, which also arose out of the ashes of World War I, Ataturk's Turkey made no allowances for the ethnic identity of small ethnic groups in its school system, the legal system, territorial administration etc. Such manifestations of *kabilecilik* (tribalism) were condemned by the Turkish state as it sought to forge a unified people. In this climate it is not surprising that most Turkish citizens of

[72] The preamble Peace at Home, Peace Abroad was still found in the Turkish Constitution of 1982.

[73] Article 10 of the Turkish constitution states all citizens of the Turkish Republic are 'Turkish people' irrespective of their actual ethnicity. Ataturk is famous for his saying "Happy is a man who calls himself a Turk."

Tatar descent felt compelled to demonstrate their allegiance to this new Turkish *vatan* by cutting their ties to their previous homeland.

It should also be mentioned that a large portion of the Tatar immigrants who had emigrated to Anatolia in the previous century were actually of Nogai origin and considered the Kuban, steppes to the north of the Crimea, the Buçak or the Dobruca to be their lost homelands and not the Crimean Peninsula. The Nogais of these lands never developed a sense of secular national attachment to these places as a *vatan* and had little difficulty in constructing Turkey as their homeland. The vast majority of immigrants who actually came from the Crimea itself also arrived in Anatolia *prior* to the rise of nationalism among the Crimean Tatar parent community in the Crimean Peninsula. The Crimean Tatar religious immigrants had thus not yet developed a modern, national attachment to the Crimea as a fatherland at the time of their arrival. Seen in this light, there were few obstacles, other than an attachment to their traditionalist Islam, from preventing even those Tatars of direct Crimean origin from identifying with the secular republic of Turkey as their national homeland.

This immigrant group appears to have found it easy to tie its future to Ataturk's Turkish state building process and, like hundreds of thousands of non-Turkish immigrants from the Balkans and the Caucasus, the Tatars of Turkey played a key role in forming the people today known as the 'Turks'. Although the famous Crimean Tatar writer Cengiz Dagci spoke of the image of the *Pis Tatar* (Dirty Tatar) in Turkish stereotypes of this group, the Tatar immigrants to Anatolia encountered very little discrimination in their new homeland. While in Turkey in the winter of 1996, the author found that the average Turk has little negativity attached to the Tatars of Turkey who are, however, often misrepresented as 'Mongols' and erroneously linked to Tamerlane and Chingis Khan (as they are in the West) in the common Turkish imagination.[74]

While the conservative Crimean Tatar *adat* (traditions) and ways survived in villages compactly settled around the industrial town of Eski Şehir (Old Town) in eastern Anatolia, those Tatars who moved to the cities had few discriminatory barriers to prevent them from

[74] In January of 1999 Turkish Radio Television (TRT) aired a segment which accused the Crimean Tatars of having betrayed the Ottoman Empire during the failed 1683 siege of Vienna, but this strange broadcast was the exception to the rule and the Crimean Tatars are invariably (and accurately) portrayed as loyal Ottoman allies in Turkish histories.

being largely Turkified. In his discussion entitled "Crimean Diasporas in Turkey and the USSR Today", Alan Fisher provides a first hand account of the breakdown of the Tatar culture and identity which eventually extended even to isolated Tatar villages in European Turkey by the 1970s:

> I visited one small village in Turkish Thrace, Subasikoy, which had once belonged to the Giray family well before the Russian annexation of the Crimea. Even a decade ago the town was still visibly Tatar. Its mosque was a wooden one built by Selamet Giray in the eighteenth century following Tatar architectural styles, and there was a large wooden palace once belonging to the wife of a deposed Crimean Khan. But in the last two years all vestiges of its Tatar past were removed. The *imam* of the village mosque proudly said that his village was 'now going to have a mosque like those in the big city (Istanbul).'[75]

There were no public forums or political venues for the expression of Crimean Tatar identity during the Republican period in Turkey and this certainly contributed to the gradual breakdown of Crimean Tatar identity witnessed by Fisher in the 1970s. During the Cold War, Republican Turkey feared offending its powerful Soviet neighbor and Ankara allowed no Pan-Turkic movements to threaten its relations with Moscow (the right wing *'Boz Kurt'*, *Grey Wolf*, Pan-Turkist nationalist movement was largely marginalized in Republican Turkey).[76]

Although many Crimean Tatars in Turkey were horrified to hear of the 'disappearance' of their kin and the entire Tatar people from the Crimea in 1944, they were politically weak and too disorganized to lobby effectively on behalf of the Crimean Tatars in the Soviet Union. In addition, Turkey had, by the 1950s, reached an economic and political *modus vivendi* with Moscow and lucrative trade deals followed. Few in Ankara wished to damage this important relationship with the USSR over the rights of politically irrelevant Turkic minorities such as the Crimean Tatars.[77]

[75] Alan Fisher. "The Crimean Tatars, the USSR, and Turkey." *Soviet Asian Ethnic Frontiers*. ed. William McCagg and Brian Silver. New York; Pergamon Press. 1979. p. 15.

[76] Jacob Landau writes "Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, its governments have circumspectly skirted the issue of what could have been considered Turkic diasporas in the Soviet Union, in order not to induce or exacerbate tensions between the two states. Even the Nationalist Action Party which, while in opposition in Turkey, vociferously advocated the cause of the 'Captive Turks' in the Soviet Union, refrained from doing so while participating in Coalition Governments, 1975-1977." Jacob Landau. "Diaspora and Language." *Modern Diasporas in International Politics*. ed. Gabriel Sheffer. London; Croom Helm. 1986. p. 85.

Incidentally, it should be pointed out that the vast majority of Turks of Tatar descent in Turkey, and the much smaller community who still actively identify with the Crimea, are staunch Turkish nationalists. The first generation of Crimean Tatars in Republican Turkey often stressed their loyalty to Turkey by becoming ultra-Turkish nationalists. The minority of Crimean Tatars in Republican Turkey who continued to politically or emotionally identify with their kin in the Crimean Peninsula and their former homeland (and may thus be defined a diaspora), have tended to call themselves *Kırım Türkleri* (Crimean Turks) to stress their loyalty to the idea of Turkey and their own Turkic roots. There may have also been government pressure on these Tatars to call themselves Crimean 'Turks'. According to Lowell Bezanis, the Turkish security service (MIT, the National Intelligence Organization) warned the Crimean Tatars of Turkey to use the term 'Turk' and not 'Tatar' in their publications.[78]

Even as the Turkish government appears to have thus sought the assimilation and Turkification of the 'Crimean Turks', some members of the community actively struggled to foster a diasporic mentality among their kin through literature. The works in Turkish of the popular Crimean Tatar writer Cengiz Dagci (who made his way from the Crimea through war torn Europe to London during the final days of World War II), in particular, kept the memory of the Crimea alive in the minds of a whole generation of Crimean Turks. Many in the Turkish diaspora rediscovered their links to the Crimean homeland through works like Dagci's widely read *Yurdunu Kaybeden Adam* (The Man Who Lost His Homeland). Dagci's works described the beauty of the Crimean countryside and the importance of maintaining a bond to this land by the Tatar community of Turkey. In a passage from his most well known work, *Those Lands Were Ours (O Topraklar Bizimdi)*, for example, Dagci described the Crimean village of Cukuruça using language meant to evoke identification with the contours of the Crimea in his readership:

[77] It should also be stated that there was always the issue of the Kurds. If the Turks were to actively support the Crimean Tatar struggle (the *only* active dissident movement among the Turkic-Muslims of the USSR from the 1950s to early 1980s) Moscow would certainly retaliate by openly supporting the more serious Kurdish claims to a homeland of their own in eastern Turkey.

[78] Lowell Bezanis. "Soviet Muslim Emigres in the Republic of Turkey." *Central Asian Survey*. (1994). 13. (1). p. 113.

> Cukuruça was also beautiful...On the one side there were green gardens which looked like the deep jade color of the Black Sea; on the other side there were wheat fields washed under the heat of the sun, in the middle there was Cukuruça as if at the bottom of a bowl.
>
> The river Salgir emerged at the foot of the Çadir Dağ and moved stealthily through the forests, thinning out here and becoming larger there, and becoming big and strong as it approached Cukuruça with longing to embrace the village, it shone under the sun like silver and resembled a great shimmering belt.[79]

In another work entitled The Terrible Years *(Korkunç Yilları)* Dagci talks of the deep sorrow he, as a Crimean Tatar patriot, felt when leaving his Crimean homeland during World War II for service in the Soviet army:

> I abandoned my homeland in the autumn of 1942. The separation was very painful, I felt that I would never return to my homeland *(yurt)*. In the train station my mother, father, brothers and relatives gathered. I looked at them through the window of my compartment as I thought of the sweet and bitter days I had spent with them...Through the window I looked at the ancestral lands lost to us. This soil sang bloody songs. I listened to these songs for many hours and begged God not to separate me from this land. These lands are ours, they are the gift of our ancestors. We could be hungry or naked but we should remain here. If we die, we should die on this land. My homeland *(vatan)*, my homeland, in whatever corner of the world I should find myself, as long as I live you shall remain with me.[80]

Dagci's widely read works popularized Crimean Tatar diasporic patriotism among the Turkified Tatars in Turkey and, in many interviews, Crimean Tatars from Turkey describe the impact that this writer's works had on them. In many respects, Dagci's close ties to the Crimea were similar to those of the last group of immigrants to arrive in Turkey from the Crimea from World War I to World War II.

During the 1920s and 1930s there was a small trickle of emigration from the Crimea to Turkey and, although there are no precise numbers for this migration, it probably consisted of less than 10,000 immigrants.

Mubeyyin Batu Altan, a Crimean Tatar leader from the USA, has researched this migration and has found that these immigrants made use of a network of friends and relatives who had previously settled

[79] Cengiz Dagci. *O Topraklar Bizimdi.* Istanbul; Varlik Yayinevi. 1972. p. 24.
[80] Cengiz Dagci. *Korkunç Yilları.* Istanbul; Otuken. 1989. p. 10.

in Turkey to find housing, assistance and long lost kin. Altan mentions three sites in Istanbul which became transit centers for Crimean Tatars immigrating to the Turkish Republic in the 1930s. These included *Nuri Demirağa'in Kahvehanesi* (Nuri Demiraga's Coffeehouse), the *Tashan Kerevansaray* (Tashan Caravan Inn) and the *Hamza Bey'in Kahvehanesi* (Hamza Bey's Coffeehouse). Altan writes:

> Hamza Bey's coffeehouse later became the meeting place and the unofficial community center of the Crimean Tatars in diaspora. Those who wanted to find their long lost friends or relatives usually came to this place first. My own father had gone to Hamza Bey's coffeehouse in 1960 to look for his friend whose address in Istanbul he did not know. For almost thirty years this little coffeehouse served as the honorary Consulate of the Crimean Tatars.[81]

Those who arrived in the 1930s were joined by another group of Crimean Tatar migrants who left the Crimea during World War II. This small wave of settlers consisted of approximately 6,000 Crimean Tatars who fled the Soviet Union, for the most part, with the retreating German army. After several years in displacement camps in Europe this group was offered asylum in Turkey. After being assisted by Cafer Seydahmet and other members of the Tatar diaspora in Turkey many joined their kin already settled in this land.

One member of this exiled group, Memet Sevdiyar (who later emigrated to the USA) started a diaspora journal in Turkey known as *Kirım*. Sevdiyar had published a nationalist journal in the Crimea during the Nazi occupation known as *Azat Kirım* (Free Crimea) and continued to support the Crimean Tatar nationalist cause from Turkey in his newspaper.

Another immigrant to Turkey in the aftermath of the German occupation who was to rise to prominence in the American Crimean Tatar diaspora after migrating to the USA was the aforementioned Mubeyyin Batu Altan. Altan described his family's migration to Turkey from displaced persons camps in Europe after World War II as follows:

> Turkey was always *'Ak Toprak'* to Crimean Tatars. When we were in refugee camps in Germany during World War II, we were given the opportunity to resettle anywhere in the free world. My paternal grandmother, may she rest in peace, gathered all her children and said 'I

[81] Mubeyyin Batu Altan. "Three Historic Places". Part of an as yet unpublished study by this historian on the migrations of the Crimean Tatars to Turkey in the inter-war period.

> want to go to Turkiye, it is *'Ak Toprak'*; I want to drink my coffee under a coffee tree there and die there in peace. After I die you are free to go anywhere you wish.'[82]

In addition to literature, Crimean Tatar folk traditions were kept alive in Turkey through folk troupes and dances and cultural meetings organized by the *Kırım Milli Merkezi* (Crimean National Center). During this period, many Crimean Turks of the Eski Şehir region (a little visited region in Western Turkey known only for its nearby Phyrgian ruins) continued to speak Tatar on the streets, to maintain Crimean Turk cultural associations, such as the *Kırım Türkleri Yardımlaşma Cemiyeti*-Crimean Turk Aid Society established by the Dobrucan Tatar émigré Müstecip Ülküsal, and to instill in their youth an appreciation for Crimean Tatar traditions.

Ülküsal, and a dedicated circle of Crimean Tatar activists in Turkey who became leaders of this community following the death of Cafer Seydahmet, sought first and foremost to prevent the assimilation of their people. These energetic activist frequently spoke out against the loss of Crimean Tatar collective identity in Turkey. In a typical interview, this leader compared the fate of his people to that of the Jewish diaspora, which is admired and seen as a model for the activists of the Crimean Tatar diasporas in Turkey and Central Asia:

> ..the Jewish people despite two thousand years of living without a homeland, were able to retain their national and ethnic identity, so that when the opportunity arose after World War II they could reestablish their nation. The Crimean Tatars in Turkey, after only a few decades of living without a homeland, are already beginning to fall apart and lose their identity.[83]

Ülküsal felt that the publication of the diasporic journal *Emel* (Aspiration) in Turkey would keep the Crimean Turks aware of the Crimean Tatars' struggle in the USSR and encourage them to continue to link themselves to their Crimean Tatar nation and its lost homeland. Most importantly, through its publication of the journal of *Emel* (published in Turkish but often including poems in Tatar with Turkish translations), the *Crimean Turk Aid Society* kept its modest readership informed of the struggle the Crimean Tatars were waging to return to their homeland following the 1944 deportation.

One of the most pressing topics in issues of *Emel* from the 1970s

[82] Mubeyyin Batu Altan. Account relayed to the author, January 1999.
[83] Alan Fisher. op. cit. no. 75. p. 15.

and 1980s was the fate of Crimean Tatar dissidents, such as the activist Mustafa Dzhemilev, who were jailed by the Soviet authorities for boldly challenging Moscow's policy of refusing to allow the exiled Crimean Tatar people to return to the Crimea. In a letter to a leader of the small, but mobilized, Crimean Tatar diaspora of the USA, Fikret Yurter, an imprisoned Dzhemilev spoke of his appreciation of Turkey and the support he received from relatives there. In 1980, Dzhemilev, who was still a relatively unknown political prisoner, wrote "If you write to our relatives in Turkey, send them my greetings. It is my childhood dream to visit Turkey someday because for me it is a continuation of our homeland."[84]

At this time the notion of a Crimean Tatar (and especially a dissident figure high on the KGB's list of enemies of the state) leaving the USSR and visiting Turkey was a dream at best. After being released from the *Gulag*-Soviet State Prison Camp System (due in part to the efforts of Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov and US President Ronald Reagan), this defiant champion of his people's cause, who spent 16 years in jail in a seemingly hopeless struggle to return his people to the Crimea, was at last to fulfill his dream of visiting Turkey.

Upon returning to the Crimea with his people from the Central Asian exile in 1990, Dzhemilev became the first elected leader of the Crimean Tatar *Mejlis* and this former dissident was to find himself frequently flying to Ankara and Istanbul (on occasion accompanied by the presidents of the Ukraine or the Crimean Republic) to meet with the Turkish Prime Minister, Turkish President and other Turkish government and business leaders as the head of a nation which had not existed in Ankara's foreign policy considerations during the Soviet period. Like many of his Crimean Tatar countrymen (and millions of other Turkic nations of Post-Soviet Eurasia), Mustafa Dzhemilev was to pin great hopes on Turkey's role as a kin-state in helping his Turkic-Islamic people rebuild their lives in their cherished homeland after 70 years of Soviet oppression.

[84] Mubeyyin Batu Altan. "The Importance of Family-A Personal Memoir." *Tatars of the Crimea. The Return to the Homeland.* ed. Edward Allworth. Durham; Duke University Press. 1998. p. 106.

Turkey's Rediscovery of its 'Crimean Turkish Brothers'

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and Turkish president Turgut Ozal's burst of interest in the *Dış Türkleri* (the 'Outer Turks', i.e. the newly independent Turkic nations of the former Soviet Union, such as the Tatars, Turkmens, Azerbaijanis, Kazakhs, Uzbeks etc.) official Turkey's attitude towards the Crimean Tatars began to change. The subject of the Crimean Tatars and other Turkic groups was no longer taboo in the Turkish Republic and, with the West's support, Turkey proclaimed itself the "morning star" rising to guide the Turkic peoples of the former Soviet Union into a prosperous new era. Millions of post-Soviet Turkic-Muslims turned to secular, pro-West, capitalist Turkey for a model to be emulated.

Like other ex-Soviet Turkic groups, from the Gagauz (a Christian Turkic minority in southern Moldavia) to the Kazakhs, the Crimean Tatars looked to Turkey for official recognition and financial assistance. As the Crimean Tatars returned from exile in Central Asia to the Crimea in the early 1990s, they lacked the necessary funds for building housing, health facilities, libraries, schools and, in a word, for reestablishing their nation on the soil of the Crimea. As a Western sponsored NATO member, Ozal's Turkey was the obvious source for such funding.

Turkish leaders, such as Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, President Suleiman Demirel and Turkish ambassador Acar Germen, subsequently visited the Crimea to show their support for the Crimean Tatars during the 1990s. In a 1994 meeting with Mustafa Dzhemilev, President Suleiman Demirel, for example, described the Crimean Tatars *as "Kırım Türk kardeşlerimiz"* (our Crimean Turkish brothers) and promised to help them rebuild their society.[85] Ambassador Acar Germen similarly proclaimed "The Turkish government is very interested in the Crimean Tatar question, gives it great importance and will not deprive them of any protection."[86] Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz described the Crimean Tatars as a "cultural bridge" between Turkey and the Ukraine during his visit in 1998 and there were high hopes for establishing the Crimean Tatars as cultural and business intermediaries between Kyiv (Kiev) and Ankara.[87] Turkish president

[85] "Süleyman Demirel'in Mustafa Adülcemil Kırımoğlu'nu Kabulünde Yaptığı Konuşma." *Emel.* May. 1994. no. 202. p. 13.

[86] *Qirim Sedasi.* Febuary, 1993. no 2 (3). p. 1.

[87] *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newsline.* vol. 2. No. 30. Part II. February 1998. "Turkish Premier in Kyiv." p. 2.

Suleiman Demirel declared "We are interested in the fate of the Crimean Tatars. They are numerous in our country, as well as in Russia and Ukraine. Our interest in the Tatars is not of a political nature. We want them to have safety and respect in their own country since they are our brothers."[88]

From a geo-strategic perspective it was certainly beneficial for Turkey to have a Turkic Muslim presence in the Crimean Peninsula to counteract the danger of Russian nationalism in this vital area. Dzhemilev hinted at this in a 1992 interview stating "The Turks and Crimean Tatars are both Turkic peoples and closely related by language, religion, and cultural tradition...Needless to say, it is quite relevant to Turkey whether the Crimea is to be a military outpost of an imperial power that has missiles aimed at Turkish territory, or an autonomous territory of a kindred people."[89]

Perhaps in recognition of the Crimean Tatars' important role as mediators with Kyiv and their potential role as a pro-Turkish presence in the strategic Crimean Peninsula, Ankara is reported to have channeled millions of U.S. dollars in aid to the Crimean Tatars in the early 1990s.[90] In addition, the Turkish government promised to build 1,000 residences for the destitute Crimean Tatar repatriates in the Crimea "as a contribution to the return of the Crimean Turks to their historic homeland."[91]

Contacts between the Crimean Tatars and Turks took place on many levels at this time. In April of 1992 Mustafa Dzhemilev visited Turkey for the 72nd anniversary of the Turkish Parliament and was accorded the same official reception as other visiting delegations and ambassadors from other states; the Turkish *Red Crescent* donated hundreds of thousands of dollars in relief supplies (food, clothes, and medicine) to the Crimean Tatar settlements in 1992; a conference was held in Eski Şehir, Turkey in February 1992 on the Crimean Tatar struggle; Dzhemilev visited Turkish President Suleiman

[88] Alexander Gagus. "Interview with Turkish President Suleiman Demirel." *The Armenian Reporter.* vol. 27. no. 28. p. 18.

[89] Ursula Doroszweska. "Interview with Mustafa Dzhemilev." *Uncaptive Minds.* Fall, 1992. vol. no. 4. no. 3. pp. 23-24.

[90] Andrew Wilson. "Politics in and Around the Crimea. A Difficult Homecoming." *Tatars of the Crimea. The Return to the Homeland.* ed. Edward Allworth. Durham; Duke University Press. 1998. p. 316. p. 44.

[91] Ibid. p. 293. Vladimir Socor. "Demirel Asserts Turkish Interests in Ukraine and Moldova." *Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty Research Report.* vol. 3, no. 31. August 12, 1994. p. 19.

Demirel in his residence in 1992; Dzhemilev flew to Cyprus for a meeting with the head of the Turkish Republic of Cyprus, Rauf Denktash in February of 1993; a "Turk-Tatar-Crimea Trade Fair" organized by the Turkish *Kar Toplugulu* (Profit Society) was held in Simferopol in 1995; sheep were sent to the Crimea from Turkey for use in the annual *Kurban Bayram* sacrifices, and so forth.[92]

By the mid 1990s, however, the euphoria had worn off as the reality of Turkey's limited financial resources set in. While one could buy maps on the streets of Istanbul showing a unified "Turkish" world (the Turkish language does not make the distinction between 'Turkic' and 'Turkish') extending from Northern Cyprus to *'Doğu Turkestan'* ('Eastern Turkestan' i.e. Chinese Xingkiang, the territory of the restless Turkic Uighurs), Turkey lacked the resources to unify or seriously assist its post-Soviet Turkic 'little brothers' in modernizing and Westernizing. With the rise to power of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan and his Islamicist *Refah* (Welfare) Party in the mid 1990s, Turkey's focus switched from the 'Outer Turks' to the Arab world and the grandiose dreams of establishing a vast Eurasian brotherhood of Turkic nations was forgotten. The money for constructing the promised apartments in the Crimea for the Tatars, for example, never materialized under Erbakan's successors Mesut Yilmaz and Bulent Ecevit and assistance granted to the returnees was largely limited to cultural programs.

It should, for example, be mentioned that scores of Crimean Tatar students were offered scholarships in technical schools and colleges in Turkey in the early 1990s as part of a cultural exchange.[93] As the Crimean Tatar *Mejlis* (Parliament) in the Crimea began plans to switch the alphabet for Crimean Tatar language from Cyrillic to the Latin script of the Republic of Turkey by the year 2002 (a symbolic gesture which would severe the Tatars' ties to Russia), the Turkish government also offered the Crimean Tatars Latin-script press machinery, readers and school books on converting the Tatar alphabet into Latin (supplied by the Turkish World Research Foundation, *Türk Dunyasi Arastimalari Vakfi*).[94]

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[92] *Kratkaia Khronika Deiatel'nosti Medzhlisa Krymskotatarskogo Naroda.* Simferopol; Milli Mejlis. 1996. pp. 23, 26, 27. Adam Albion. "Crimean Diary." *Institute of Current World Affairs.* July 20, 1995. p. 5.

[93] "Dvukhstupenchataia Sistema Otbora Studentov v Turtsiiu." *Golos Kryma.* July 4, 1997. p. 1.

[94] "Crimean Tatars to Switch to Latin Script." *Jamestown Foundation Monitor.* April 11, 1997. vol. III. no. 7.

Many Russified Crimean Tatar students (who are more the product of a Soviet culture than Islamic traditions), however, had problems adapting to life in Turkey. While in Turkey, the author was told that the Crimean Tatar exchange students usually spoke Russian among themselves (due to a greater knowledge of Russian than Tatar, a result of linguistic Russification during the exile period) and did not adapt well to the Turkish educational system. In addition, the Turkish readers remained largely unused (the author found dusty stacks of them unopened in the *Mejlis* headquarters in Simferopol) as the Latinization program lacked sufficient funding to publish books and newspapers in Latin script. It should also be mentioned that Ankara shied away from offering too much assistance and outward support for the struggles of small Turkic or Muslim groups (such as the Gagauz, Chechens, Crimean Tatars, Abkhaz, and Meshketian Turks) in the former Soviet Union since they did not have the clout of internationally recognized states. This was done, in part, because Turkey feared damaging its vital relationship with states such as the Ukraine (which, is perhaps seen as the most important strategic and economic partner in Turkey's developing Black Sea foreign policy), Georgia or Russia, by involving itself in matters with these small groups.

The Struggle to Mobilize the Crimean Tatar Diaspora of Turkey

The Crimean Turk activists in Turkey in many ways offered more substantial help than their government. Members of the Tatar diaspora in Turkey claim to have sent millions of dollars to the Tatar community of the Crimea for building health facilities and houses for the Crimean Tatars whose financial resources had often been wiped out by skyrocketing inflation which swept the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s. In this respect, the Turkish diaspora assisted the Crimean Tatars in staking a claim to their homeland and functioned as an archetypal diaspora support community. Crimean Tatar activists in Turkey who sought to mobilize support for their kin in the Crimea correctly noticed that the world community knew little of the Crimean Tatars' tragic situation in the Crimea and it was up to them to assist their kin.

In the early 1990s ties between the Crimean Tatars in the Crimea and the diaspora in Turkey expanded. On his fund raising visits to

Turkey, Mustafa Dzhemilev was feted by leading members of the Turkish diaspora and the role of Mustafa Dzhemilev 'Kirimoglu' ('The Son of the Crimea' as he was known in Turkey) in returning his people to the Crimea lauded. In February 1993, in one of the most symbolic meetings of the Crimean Tatars' long history of migration and diaspora, Mustafa Dzhemilev Kirimoglu, the leader of the Crimean Tatar diaspora in the former Soviet Union, met with the 95 year old Mustecip Ulküsal, the father figure of the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey and the Dobruca at a banquet in their honor.[95] In addition, Dzhemilev was given an honorary degree from Seljuk University in Konya, made an honorary citizen of the Turkish cities of Kastamonu and Kirikkale, he was given a Human Rights award from the city of Izmir in Western Turkey, a park was dedicated to him in Istanbul etc.

In August of 1992 the leaders of the Bulgarian, Romanian and Turkish Tatar diasporas held a meeting in Erdeke Turkey dedicated to the theme "The Role of the Crimean Tatar Emigration in the Future of the Crimea."[96] In addition to these symbolic gestures, a considerable amount of real assistance was channeled from the Turkish diaspora to the Crimean Tatars in the Crimea through such organizations as the *Evlad Vakfi* (Children's Charity) which provides assistance to sick Crimean Tatar children.

One must not, however, overestimate the significance of this rather limited support from the Turkish diaspora organizations (which have multiplied since 1991). Activists from assistance programs, such as the 'Main Center for Cultural and Aid Associations of the Crimean Turks' *(Kırım Türkleri Yardımlaşma ve Dernegi Genel Merkezi)* headed by Dr. Ahmet Kirimli (successor to Cafer Seydahmet and Müstecip Ulküsal who died in 1996) have complained of the difficulties they have faced in raising funds for their Crimean Tatar brothers and sisters from the Turkified majority of this "five million person diaspora." In an interview I conducted with Mustafa Dzhemilev in the fall of 1997, this leader also discussed the difficulties he faced in raising funds from the Crimean Tatar diaspora of Turkey for assisting his

[95] "Bir Asir Qirim Içü Çarpqan Yürek. Müstecip Ulküsal." *Qirim Sedasi.* 1996. pp. 6-7.

[96] At this time it declared "The Activities of the Crimean Tatar organizations in the emigration will be realized in the spirit of unity and under the aegis of the *Mejlis* of the Crimean Tatar people." *Kratkaia Khronika Deiatel'nosti Medzhlisa Krymskotatarskogo Naroda.* Simferopol; Milli Mejlis. 1996. p. 21.

nation in rebuilding itself in the Crimea. Dzhemilev pointed out that, while many members of the Turkish diaspora community were genuinely interested in the struggle of the Crimean Tatars in their homeland, they were usually unable to mobilize the apathetic majority. Dzhemilev claimed:

> I have visited with many leaders and wealthy members of the Tatar community in Turkey...we drink tea together and they talk of the Green Island of the Crimea, but they usually offer very little tangible assistance for our people. Yes they have offered us real help for which we are fortunate, but it is of course never enough. While many of the Turkish Tatars talk of moving back to their Crimean homeland, none of them actually want to leave their prosperous lives in Turkey to come and live in this place. Besides, most don't even know Russian or the ins and outs of this country. In both economic and political terms the Crimea has little to offer our people in Turkey. Look how many problems we face in getting our people from Uzbekistan citizenship, imagine the headache of trying to get Ukrainian citizenship for Tatars from Turkey![97]

Dzhemilev's comments on the Crimean Turk diaspora's unwillingness to make the sacrifices needed to migrate back to their natal land are, in many ways, a telling commentary on the level of identification with the Crimea among the Crimean Tatar diaspora community of Turkey. This statement also highlights the Crimean Tatar leadership's acceptance of the impracticality of plans to resettle the Crimea with Crimean Tatars from the Turkish and Balkan diasporas.

In earlier periods, when the Crimean Tatar leadership of the early 1990s was flush with the success of returning their people to the Crimea and confronted with anti-Tatar pogroms, they hoped to fulfill the early Soviet-era nationalists' dream of returning their kin from Turkey and the Balkans to the Crimean Peninsula. There was, a strong desire in Crimean Tatar leadership circles to rebuild a Crimean Tatar presence in the homeland in demographic terms. The "five million" Crimean Tatars living in Turkey would, it was hoped, assist the Crimean Tatar nation in reversing two centuries of "de-Tatarization" of their homeland.

The returning Crimean Tatars looked at the example of Israel and the role that returning Jewish *aliyahs* played in this state's construction for inspiration. Most importantly, the Crimean Tatars in the former Soviet Union hoped that their diaspora in Turkey would

[97] Interview with Mustafa Dzhemilev. Bahçesaray. November 1997.

provide their repatriated nation with the sort of vocal lobbying support and financial resources that the Jewish diaspora gave during the construction of Israel after 1948.

The Crimean Tatar leaders' hopes for the mobilization of the Turkish Tatar diaspora were not as far fetched as they may have seemed in hindsight. The Armenian victory over Azerbaijan in the conflict over Nagorno Karabagh, for example, was made possible by the considerable financial support the Armenian side received from its diaspora in Europe and America. In addition, one has but to look at the example of the important role that diasporas played in the armed liberation struggles of two Muslim ethnic groups attempting to carve statelets out of the ruins of Communist states, the Chechens and Kosovar Albanians, to see how effective these understudied diasporas could be in shaping events in their former homelands.

The Chechen War of the mid 1990s was bankrolled, to a considerable extent, by Turks of Chechen descent who migrated to the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century; Chechen-Turks were influential in whipping up public opinion in Turkey in support of the beleaguered Chechens during the bloody Russian invasions of Ichkeria (the self proclaimed Chechen state) and in funneling money, weapons, medicine and supplies to the Chechens through the auspices of the North Caucasus Solidarity Committee; the Russian embassy in Ankara was picketed during the war by Turkish-Chechens; a Turk hijacked a plane in Munich to draw attention to the Chechen tragedy; wounded Chechen fighters convalesced in Turkey etc.

Perhaps the most striking example of the Chechen diaspora of Turkey supporting the struggle of their kin against Russia, however, took place in mid July 1996. On this occasion, a group of Turks of Chechen origin, calling themselves 'The Grandsons of Shamil', hijacked a Black Sea ferry (the *Avrasya*) filled with two hundred Russian traders which operated between Sochi and the Turkish port of Trebizond. The hijackers' aim was to bring to the world's attention the desperate plight of a trapped Chechen band (headed by Chechen field commander Salman Raduyev), which was being bombarded by Russian forces in Pervomaiskoye in Chechnya's neighboring province of Dagestan. During the hijacking, scores of Turks brought banners to the shore supporting the hijackers as they cruised along the coast of northern Turkey. While the world remained uninterested in the fate of the little known Chechen people, Turkish opinion was clearly on the side of both the Chechen rebels and the hijackers who were lauded as heroes in Turkey. The hijackers incidentally, later "escaped" to Chechnya after their peaceful surrender to Turkish authorities and brief incarceration in Turkey.[98]

The most notable contribution to the Chechen cause during the war, however, probably came from the Chechens in Jordan. Several of Chechen president Djokhar Dudayev's ministers were Jordanian Chechens including the Chechen Foreign Minister Shamseddin Yusuf. Another shadowy figure in the Chechen military, Emir Khattab, is also said to be a Jordanian.[99] Khattab ranked up with Shamil Basayev as one of the most audacious Chechen field commanders and has continued his attacks on Russian Federation forces following the 1999-2001 Russian invasion of Chechnya.[100] During the height of the Chechen conflict a Russian politician referring to Khattab's suspected Jordanian origins wrote "If the Russian government were to threaten Jordan with missile strikes, the Jordanians would find a way of suppressing their bloody Khattab."[101]

According to a source who visited Chechen diaspora organizations in Aman Jordan, Chechen organizations there may have raised as much as 1.2 million dollars to support the Chechen side during the 1994-96 Russo-Chechen conflict.[102] During this war, Emil Payin claims "financial and military assistance flowed to the Chechen rebels from the Chechen diasporas in the CIS countries, the Middle East, Europe and the United States."[103]

In 1999 the Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) received similar support from the large Albanian diaspora of Europe.[104] In the face of growing Yugoslav oppression in the province of Kosovo,

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[98] Interestingly enough, the leader of the hijackers, Muhammed Tokcan, was actually of Circassian descent and had previously fought in defense of the Abkhazians in their brief secessionist war with Georgia. Vanora Bennett. *Crying Wolf. The Return to War in Chechnya.* London; Macmillan Press. 1998. p. 447.

[99] "Russia's War Hits Home." *Newsweek.Com. International.* p. 1. Another account claims Khattab is actually from Saudi Arabia. "Profile. Khattab Islamic Revolutionary." *BBC News. World. Online.* Wednesday, September 29. 1999.

[100] Evgeni Krutukov. "Khattab. Chelovek Niotkuda." *Izvestiia.* Dec. 3. 1999. p. 1. This account theorizes that Khattab actually has Arab bedouin origins.

[101] "Russia Goes Nuclear over Chechnya." *Jamestown Foundation. Prism.* September 1999. no. 17. no. 3.

[102] Vanora Bennett. op. cit. no. 98. p. 445-7.

[103] Emil Payin. "Armed Conflict in Kosovo and Chechnya: A Comparison." *The Forced Migration Monitor.* No. 25. Sept. 1998. pp. 1-6. p. 4.

[104] The Albanian diaspora of Europe is mainly made up of 'guestworkers' working in the neighboring countries of Switzerland, Austria and Germany who made more money as guest workers than their compatriots at home.

Albanians from throughout the European diaspora flocked to Kosovo to contribute money and soldiers for the struggle against the Serbian military in the summer and fall of 1998. Most analysts feel that the increasingly well armed and organized guerrilla army of the Kosovar Albanians could not have acquired its effective form without the crucial financial assistance and volunteerism of the Albanian *'Gastarbeiter'* diaspora in Europe. Funding and volunteers also came from American Albanians living in the USA who launched fund raisers and sent several hundred men to support their kin in their struggle with the Serbian regime through such organizations as Homeland Calling.

While the Turks identify with the struggle of the Albanians and Chechens for independence, they are not of course supportive of the independence struggle of the Kurds of eastern Turkey which is also financially supported by a large diaspora of approximately 850,000, located, for the most part, in Western Europe. This diaspora's potential for effective mobilization was vividly displayed when the leader of the Kurdish rebellion against Ankara, Abdullah Ocalan, was arrested by Turkish agents in February of 1999. When news of this Kurdish national leader's arrest was broadcast, Kurds of the European diaspora launched massive protest rallies and attacked embassies in cities throughout Europe, such as the Hague, Geneva, London, Athens, Moscow, Erevan, and Frankfurt. This mass display of activism brought the case of the Kurdish people to the world's attention in the way that the isolated bombings of Kurdish terrorists in the 1970s had never succeeded in doing.

In the case of the Crimean Tatars, such direct support in men, materiel or militancy was not, however, forthcoming from the Tatar diaspora of Turkey. While many Crimean Turks strongly empathize with the Crimean Tatars' plight they do not have the martial traditions of the Kurds, Chechens and Albanians. By 1992, the Tatar leadership in the Crimea had to face the fact that the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey lacked both the resources and the stomach to support a confrontational approach to the Crimean authorities. Many Crimean Turk-Tatars in Turkey looked to the Crimea with romantic nostalgia but were arm-chair activists at best.

Chervonnaia speaks at this time of the "already noticeable and inarguable rejection by the leadership of the Crimean Tatar national movement of the idea of its right to represent all the multi-million foreign diaspora and to aim for the return of all the descendants of

those generations of pre-revolutionary Crimean Tatars who were forced to emigrate to Turkey and the Balkan Peninsula."[105] This source presents the following analysis of this issue:

> Until recently there was a hidden calculation that not only those Crimean Tatars deported in 1944 and their descendants would return to the Crimea, but also that those 'countrymen' *(sootechestvenniky)*, who found themselves living abroad, for the most part in Turkey, as a result of several waves of emigration from the end of the 18th to the beginning of the 20th centuries, would provide armed enthusiasts for the Crimean Tatar national movement, they would arrive to defend the rights of this people in conflicts with those who constantly stressed their (the Crimean Tatars') numerical inferiority in regards to the to the total population of the Crimea...There was a serious argument for arming the Crimean Tatar national movement in that period when it was still in constant conflict with the Crimean and Ukrainian authorities and with a significant part of the non-Tatar population of the Crimea. Nobody could, however, seriously count on the 'five million' Crimean Tatars living in Turkey to return to the Crimea and this number was more of a symbol than the result of any survey since a census had not been carried out on ethnicity among the Crimean Tatars in Turkey. But the idea itself was very important as a means of pressuring those forces that wanted to keep the Crimean Tatars in the position of a minority without rights.[106]

The fact that the Crimean Tatar diaspora of Turkey was not able to offer the sort of massive, hands-on assistance envisioned by the Crimean Tatar leadership in the Ukraine should not, however, be taken as a sign of political apathy of the Tatar diaspora of Turkey. In all segments of Turkey there is an increasing identification with the struggles of Muslim peoples inhabiting the lost lands of the former Ottoman Empire and the 'Children of Mehmed the Conqueror' who assimilated into Turkish society are increasingly rediscovering their roots.[107] Hugh Poulton has shown that the feeling of identification among the Turks with 'kin groups' or former Ottoman Muslim

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[105] Svetlana Chervonnaia. *Krymskotatarskoe Natsional'noe Dvizhenie (1994-1996)*. Moscow; Rossiskaia Akademiia Nauk. 1997. p. 15.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Mehmet Ersoy points out that, the disparate peoples of Turkey, from the Alevis (Shiite Muslims) to the Lazes, were on the one hand united by Turkish citizenship, which aimed to "supplant other levels of religious, ethnic, cultural and regional identity." On the other hand this source claims "the other levels of identity remained alive beneath the surface and were never fully relinquished." Mehmet Aksif Ersoy. "Chosen Traumas of the Alavis in Anatolia." *Mind and Human Interaction. History Myth and Mind.* Vol. 9. no. 1. 1998. p. 41.

subjects is heightened when these people are seen as a 'front-line' oppressed minority without a state, such as the Kosovar Albanians, Chechens, Abkhaz and Crimean Tatars.[108]

The Awakening of the Crimean Tatar Diaspora in Turkey

The tragic fate of Muslim groups in the Balkans, Caucasus and Crimea, which resulted from the collapse of Communism in this region, reminded many people of the mass destruction of Muslim ethnies that took place when the Ottoman Empire collapsed in Europe in the 19th century. For many who were familiar with the history of European Muslim groups there was in fact a sense of *de ja vue* as the collapse of Communism in Eurasia led to increased attacks on Muslim ethnic groups in Bosnia, Nagorno Karabagh, Chechnya, the Crimea and Kosovo. While none of these struggles was black or white in the moral equation, many Turks of the 1990s saw them as an assault on the few surviving 'Children of Mehmed the Conqueror' and identified with the Muslims who were in all these cases on the defensive.

These events were to lead to an increasing re-identification by many Turks (who had once only passively identified themselves as being of Caucasian, Balkan or Crimean descent) with events taking place in previously unheard of locales, such as Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Grozny, Stephanakert, Alushta, Sukhumi, Racak, Drenica and Pristina. Events such as: Bulgaria's campaign to expel or Bulgarize its Turkish minority from 1984 to 1989; the expulsion of Azerbaijani Muslims from Nagorno-Karbagh by the victorious Armenians; the Georgian invasion of its secessionist province of Abkhazia (the Abkhazians are seen as *irkdaşlar*-kin despite the fact that most are Orthodox Christian); the unprecedented attacks on civilian populations in Grozny, Chechnya by Russian Federation forces in 1994-96 and 1999-2001 and construction of notorious 'filtration camps' where widespread torture of Chechen civilians was reported; the ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims by Republika Srpska forces; attacks on Crimean Tatar settlers returning to the Crimea; and the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Muslim Albanians from their homes

[108] Hugh Poulton. "Turkey as a Kin State. Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Turkish and Muslim Communities in the Balkans." *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State.* ed. Hugh Poulton. London; Hust and co. 1997. p. 198.

in the Serbian province of Kosovo in the spring of 1999, have all served to increase the average Turk's identification with these lands and their threatened former Ottoman communities.[109]

The surprise success of the right wing Turkish nationalist party, the MHP (the *National Movement Party*, the heir to the nationalist *Grey Wolf* party) in the April 18, 1999 Turkish elections can, in part, be ascribed to the Turks' growing alarm at the oppression of Muslim groups that were historically, culturally or ethnically linked to the Turks. The MHP, headed by Devlet Bahcelli, is avowedly Pan-Turkic and calls for greater Turkish intervention in the protection of fellow Turkic and Muslim peoples in both the former Soviet Union and the Balkans.

Perhaps the most noticeable manifestation of growing identification with the Crimea among the Tatar diaspora of Turkey occurred in 1992 when Crimean security forces attacked the Crimean Tatar settlement of Krasnii Rai (Red Heaven) built in the suburbs of Alushta, a town located on the Crimean coast which was considered off-limits to Crimean Tatar settlement. When news of this attack reached Turkey, members of the diaspora held protests in several cities, most noticeably in Kayseri, where several thousand Turks and Crimean Turk-Tatars demonstrated their solidarity with their "countrymen and co-religionists in the Crimea."[110] Protest demonstrations also took place in Constanta Romania at this time as hundreds of Crimean Tatars took to the streets to protest the attacks on their kin in the Crimea.[111]

While Westerners are most familiar with the *Kurdistan Workers' Party's* (PKK), there is also growing interest in other, largely assimilated but awakening, ethnic groups in Turkey today and the Crimean Turks are certainly worth watching. Lowell Bezanis writes:

> Just as Kurdish deputies have been elected to the Turkish parliament, albeit with mixed success, deputies who campaign locally on their Tatar connections and ability to protect the concerns of that community-in Turkey and in the Crimea-will doubtless publicly join in the political

[109] Turkish support for the beleaguered Bosnian government took the form of smuggling weapons to Bosnians despite a UN arms embargo on shipping weapons to the former Yugoslavia. Ibid. p. 200. While not actually Ottoman subjects, the Chechens are often constructed as *Evlad-i Fatih Han* in the Turkish imagination.

[110] *Kratkaia Khronika Deiatel'nosti Medzhlisa Krymskotatarskogo Naroda.* Simferopol; Milli Mejlis. 1996. p. 22.

[111] Ibid.

> melee in the future. This process will be accelerated if official Ankara decides that a more visible profile for individuals of Crimean Tatar descent is useful for foreign-policy purposes.[112]

Similarly, the Circassians, who settled in Turkey, Jordan, Israel and Syria in much greater numbers than the Crimean Tatars (and probably have several million descendants in Turkey today), are perhaps the greatest potential (but currently unmobilized) diasporic lobby in Turkey.[113] Many Turks, Jordanians and Israelis of Caucasian descent are visiting their old homelands in the Caucasus and groups from these regions are also visiting members of their diaspora in Turkey, Jordan, Syria and Israel. While in Israel in the summer of 1996, I met with a group of Circassians from their homeland in the northern Caucasus who were on a good-will tour among their kin in Jordan, Israel and Turkey. Their aim was to increase contacts and exchanges between the Circassian homeland and the Circassian diaspora and, if possible, to convince members of this diaspora to return to their old homeland and help their kin build a strong Circassian identity.[114]

The Circassians of Turkey have recently begun to commemorate their expulsion from their Caucasian homeland in an annual festival held every May 21st. On this day, Turkish Circassians cook traditional Caucasian food, lay wreaths in the Black Sea in commemoration of the scores of Circassians who died on these waters migrating to Turkey and sing songs from the Circassian homeland. The Circassians who remain in three small republics in the Russian northern Caucasus also dream of the return of this diaspora to their homeland.

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[112] Lowell Bezanis. "Rethinking 'Peace at Home, Peace Abroad." *Transition* .vol. 2. no. 12. June 14. 1996. p. 7.

[113] A Circassian-Turk wrote in 1994 "As a result of the Abkazian invasion, people began to think about 'Who am I?'. The meaning of Circassian reappeared. The identity for Circassians in Turkey began to be reconstructed...If the Kurds can gain minority rights, Circassians hope to gain democratic benefits from the experience." Janet Mayragül Çorlu. *Circassians in Istanbul.* Istanbul; Nart Yayıncık. 1994. p. 16.

[114] Helen Krag and Lars Khansen report the formation of an organization known as *Adige Khasa* which has as its primary goal the strengthening of contacts between Circassians in Russia and those in Turkey, Syria, Jordan and the USA and the organization of the return of this "vast diaspora." Most Circassians from the Middle East who have returned to their former homelands have, however, returned disillusioned. Helen Krag and Lars Khansen. *Severny Kavkaz: Narody na Perepyt'e.* Saint Petersburg; Evropeiskii Dom. 1996. p. 70.

While the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey is smaller than the Circassian diaspora it is better organized and has real potential to assist the Crimean Tatars in the Crimea in the future. Throughout Turkey even young Crimean Tatars who typically showed little interest in the Crimean Tatar cultural associations of the older generation are rediscovering their Crimean heritage. One way that leaders of the Tatar diaspora in Turkey are inculcating a sense of Crimean Tatar identity in their community is through commemorations of the *Kara Gün* (Black Day, the day of the Crimean Tatar deportation, May 18). This date serves as a powerful symbol that links Tatars of Turkey to events that occurred in their old homeland. The commemoration of the 50th anniversary of The Deportation on May 18, 1994 saw a large turnout of Crimean Turks in Istanbul, Ankara, Konya, Kirikkale, Eski Şehir, Catalça and other cities in Turkey. On this day Turkish President Suleiman Demirel met with Crimean Turk representatives, prayer ceremonies were held in the Fatih Cami Mosque in Istanbul, and a conference on the deportation was held in Ankara.[115]

In addition, a new generation of Crimean Turks have disregarded the term 'Crimean Turk' and are again actively calling themselves Crimean Tatars. A reading of the most respected journal from the Turkish diaspora, *Emel,* also shows the ways in which young Crimean Turks are encouraged to identify with the Crimea as a homeland. A section of many issues is devoted to articles entitled 'From Our Youth in the Diaspora' *(Diasporadaki Gençliğmizden).* The articles under this heading deal with the growing identification with the Crimean homeland among young Turks of Crimean Tatar descent. In an article entitled *"Thinking of the Crimea in Kırıkkale",* for example, a young Crimean Turk relates a typical story of his first visit to the local 'Crimean Turk Cultural and Assistance Organization.' Here the young author learned Crimean Tatar traditions, discussed the plight of his "countrymen" in the Crimea and sang the national anthem of the Crimean Tatars (written during World War I by the Crimean Tatar nationalist Numan Çelebi Cihan) known as "I Pledge" *(Ant Etkenmem).* This source writes:

> To gather with my friends in this kind of environment and talk about my homeland *(vatan),* to learn about its games and dances created an

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[115] L. Osmanov. "Den' Deportatsii v Turtsii." *Avdet.* no. 10. May 26, 1994. p. 1.

> almost religious feelings in me. From 7 to 70 years old, our countrymen *(vatandaşlar)* in the Crimea are struggling in their battle to live in the Crimea, I wanted to help these people and felt this was my core obligation. "I Pledge to Heal the Wounds of My Nation"...I ache for our countrymen living in the Crimea. Because now I know whose homeland the Crimea is: **The Crimea is My Homeland**.[116]

Another account from the youth of the diaspora refers to the Crimea as the Crimean Turks' *ata toprak* (fatherland):

> We are the grandchildren of fathers who came in 1878 and live with sadness from not knowing where in the homeland we are from. We have been asking our elders "Which city are we from, which village are we from" and we do not know. This causes sadness...I believe that one day the Crimean people will be saved from their trials and tribulations and will begin to live in comfort. And this is going to be accomplished by the Crimean Turks and those of us who think like and feel the pain of the Crimean people in their hearts.[117]

Another interesting column that regularly appears in the pages of *Emel* is entitled 'From Our Villages in the Diaspora' *(Diaspora'daki Köylerimizden)*. In this column, Crimean Turks provide village histories of the founding of their villages and their subsequent development in the 20th century. The writings of this column clearly demonstrate the Crimean Tatar-Turks' conceptualization of themselves as a diaspora and their growing links to both the Crimea and their own past. The following account of the settlement of the village of Karakuyu Köy in Anatolia is typical of the growth of interest not only in the Crimea, but in the process that saw the Crimean Tatars settle Turkey:

> Saying "I want to live in the *Ak Toprak*, I don't want my grave to remain in the hands of the unbeliever" the village fathers abandoned the Crimean *vatan* and, with difficulty, stayed first in Romania in the village of Karadurmuş in the Constanta vicinity and in the villages of Hasarlık and Acemeler. Saying that they longed to reside in the lands of the *Ak Toprak* they then migrated to Anatolia. Petta Aqay, Memedulla Aqay, Emir Hasan, Haci Seyit Ibrahim, Haci Habibullah Özbay, and Cemal Evirgen settled the village.

While the Circassian-Turks, Crimean-Turks, Bosnian-Turks and other 'Children of Mehmed the Conqueror' are too well assimilated

[116] Deniz Altay. "Kırıkkale'de Kırım'i Düşünmek." *Emel*. March-April. 1994. p. 29

[117] Çelebi Çevik. "Sungurlu'dan: Köyümü Bilemiyorum." *Emel*. September-October. 1994. no. 204. p. 29.

in Turkey to offer an ethnic threat to the still firmly entrenched Kemalist secular system, the resurgence of interest among these *muhacir* descendants in their origins is perhaps a natural outcome of the relaxation of Kemalism in Turkey of the 1990s.

Not surprisingly, Russia is made uneasy by this resurgence of links between the Crimean Tatars of Turkey and their compatriots in the Crimea. According to one account:

> It is important to note in this connection that an estimated five-million strong Crimean Tatar diaspora lives in Turkey. Volga-Tatars and Bashkirs are estimated to number around two million. Another eight-to-ten million Turks claim Caucasian ethnic origin. In other words, Turkey is the land of a large diaspora from the Russian/Soviet empire who emigrated to Turkey in the peak years of Russian/Soviet repression. Each one of these groups are represented in the cross-section of Turkish society and have powerful lobbies... It is partly from this larger perspective that Moscow follows with discomfort the Turkish interest in the welfare of the Crimean Tatars. In a sense, therefore, Crimean Tatars sit at the center of the Ukrainian-Russian-Turkish trilateral relationship.[118]

Although not mobilized on the scale of the Chechen or Kosovar Albanian diasporas, one can theorize that, if the Tatar population of the post-Soviet Crimea came under assault, the awakening Crimean Tatar diaspora of Turkey might change its passive stance and increase its support for its kin in the Crimea. There may thus be grounds for Russian discomfort when eyeing the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey.

In the long run, however, it may not be the artificial attempts by the Crimean Turk lobbies and associations to foster a Crimean Tatar identity in Turkey or links to the Crimea that lead to greater identification with the Crimean homeland among the Turks of Tatar descent in Turkey. It may actually be the growing contacts between the diaspora and the Tatars in the Crimea on all levels, from business to education, that bring these communities closer together.

Examples of growing contacts between the Crimean Turks and the Crimean Tatars are widely evident in both the Crimea and Turkey. Crimean Tatar students who go to Turkey to study receive hospitality and financial support from Crimean Turk associations there; Crimean Tatar *'biznesmeny'* ('businessmen', shuttle traders) make

[118] Duygu Sezer. "Ukraine, Turkey, and the Black Sea Region." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*. Vol. 10, 1996. p. 93.

the hour long flight to Istanbul across the waters of the Black Sea (which took so many of their ancestors lives in the 19th century) on Tupolev 134s and other dilapidated ex-*Aeroflot* aircraft in search of cheap goods for resale in the Crimea; the occasional restaurant owned by Turkish-Tatars is appearing in the Crimea (such as the popular 'Eski Şehir' in Simferopol); Tatars from Turkey have participated in the Crimean *Kurultays* (Congresses); both Crimean Turks and Turks are sponsoring the construction of mosques in the simple Crimean Tatar settlements in the Crimea; and Turkish-Tatars are reaffirming their Crimean Tatar identity by traveling to Bahçesaray on Kurban Bayram holiday tours to offer sacrifices in this ancient hearth of their people.

In February of 1999 a large Turkish trade delegation organized by the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) visited the Crimean Tatar community in the Crimea to discuss the opening up of trade relations between the Turks and Crimea. Most recently the Turkish airline *Turk Hava Yollari* has announced plans to open direct flights from Turkey to Simferopol and this will certainly facilitate contacts between the Tatar diaspora of Turkey and the Crimean Tatars in the Crimea.

In the face of continuing discrimination and politics designed to exclude the Crimean Tatars from the political arena in the Crimea, Crimean Tatars will continue to look to Turkey and the Crimean Tatar diaspora living there for moral support in their struggle for greater rights in their homeland. In the long run, however, Izzet Khairov, former representative in the *Milli Mejlis* (Crimean Tatar People's Parliament) who represented the Crimean Tatar diaspora remaining in the post-Soviet Uzbekistan, summed up the Crimean Tatars' stoic determination to regain their rights in the Crimea, with or without the assistance of the Turkish diaspora, during a 1997 interview with the author in Tashkent, Uzbekistan:

> In the long run no one ever has or ever will come to the aid of the Crimean Tatars. We have to rebuild our lives and our nation on our own. There is hardly enough room, jobs or housing for those Crimean Tatars in the Crimea who have already returned there. To dream of shipping in Crimean Tatars from Turkey is out of the question. We must regain our land by ourselves.[119]

[119] Interview with *Mejlis* member, Izzet Khairov. Tashkent. Uzbekistan. April. 1997.

Many challenges lie ahead for the Crimean Tatar leaders in the Crimea and Crimean Turk activists in Turkey, such as Ahmet Kirimli who is perhaps the leading figure in the Turkish diaspora in his role as president of *The Main Center for Cultural and Aid Associations of the Crimean Turks*. Kirimli has succeeded in having his organization recognized as a state-funded charity in Turkey and is actively working through it to raise funds for humanitarian purposes, education and housing among the destitute Crimean Tatars in the Crimea.

Among the most important tasks for the Crimean Tatar diaspora of Turkey in the future will be to lobby the Turkish government to support the Crimean Tatar repatriates in their struggle to gain land and rights in the Ukraine, to collect money for the construction of desperately needed housing, schools and hospitals for Crimean Tatars in the Crimea and to pass on a sense of diasporic Crimean Tatar identity to a new generation of Crimean Turks in Turkey. Crimean Tatar organizations are currently multiplying in Turkey and, with the Turkish government's relaxation of its policy of Ataturkism, their may be new public and political venues for the expression of Crimean Tatar ethnicity in Republican Turkey in the future. This politicization of the Turkish diaspora's identity will certainly benefit the Crimean Tatar struggle in the homeland and may help prevent assimilation in Turkey.

While Turkey is the home to the largest Crimean Tatar diaspora from the Ottoman period small Crimean Tatar enclaves also survived in the divided land of Dobruca. The Tatar communities that found themselves living in these Christian nation states and Communist People's Republics after World War II underwent vastly differing experiences from those in the Republic of Turkey. With the retreat of the Ottoman Empire, the sleepy Crimean Tatar villages of the Bulgarian and Romanian Dobruca were overwhelmed with Bulgarian and Romanian settlements. In small villages like Vetva, Silistre and Akkadinlar in the Bulgarian Dobruca and Constanta, Mecidiye and Tulcea in the Romanian Dobruca, this Crimean Tatar diaspora experienced Christian nation-state building during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the excesses of Communism in the post-World War II period and finally an ethno-cultural renaissance since the fall of Communism in 1989.

The coastal city of Constanta, the primary center of the Crimean Tatars in the Romanian section of Dobruca (with a population

of approximately 4,000 Tatars) best conveys the experience of the Crimean Tatar diaspora of this land in the 20th century. Constanta possesses one of the largest mosques in Romania, the Hunkiar Cami (Great Mosque), built by the Romanian King Carol after his country's independence from the Ottoman Empire, and is also the seat of the *Müfti* of Romania.

In spite of this, Constanta is today a thoroughly Romanian town. Known in the 19th century for its graceful mosques which overlooked the bay of Constanta and Islamic Ottoman architecture, the old center of Constanta was enveloped in the Communist period by prefabricated concrete apartments (built to house the Romanian proletariat which emigrated to this region in the 1950s), factories, port facilities, and Socialist public architecture. The drowsy coastal villages to the south of Constanta, a primary area of Tatar settlement, were transformed into a tourist playground for citizens from the Warsaw Pact who began to arrive here in the 1960s to enjoy this area's sandy beaches. While the occasional mosque, turban-capped marble gravestone, *medrese* , or crumbling Ottoman fortification may speak to the long history of Muslim domination in the Dobruca, this land was thoroughly Romanized during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Dobrucan Turks and Tatars of today find themselves a small minority in this land once known as Little Tatarstan.

As these transformations overtook Constanta and the other Tatar villages scattered throughout the Dobruca, it is quite remarkable that this isolated diasporic community was able to avoid assimilation. In fact, far from assimilating, the Crimean Tatars of Dobruca succeeded in developing a vibrant national movement that linked their community to its homeland, the Green Isle of the Crimea. The story of this small community's experience from 1878 to the present actually presents a unique case study in diasporic homeland and identity construction and provides an excellent comparison to the similar process that took place among the Crimean Tatars of the Soviet Central Asian exile period.

CHAPTER NINE

YEŞIL ADA. THE CONSTRUCTION OF TATAR DIASPORIC IDENTITY IN BULGARIA AND ROMANIA

While the Crimean Tatar diaspora of Turkey far outweighs the Crimean Tatar diasporas of Bulgaria and Romania in its size, mobilizing potential and political importance, the most influential leaders in the Crimean Tatar diaspora of the former Ottoman lands of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey actually emerged from the small Crimean Tatar communities of the Dobruca. This is all the more remarkable considering the size of the Crimean Tatar diaspora of Bulgaria and Romania. The vast majority of the approximately 80,000-100,000 Crimean Tatars living in the Ottoman Dobruca emigrated to Anatolia or Turkish Rumelia between 1877 and 1878 and only small communities of Tatars tenaciously survived in this land that had been settled by their ancestors since the time of the Kipchaks.

This Dobrucan Tatar minority found itself divided between the new states of Romania and Bulgaria after the 1878 Treaty of Berlin. This treaty deprived the Ottoman Empire of four fifths of its territory in Europe and close to 8 million subjects, many of whom were Muslims like the Tatars, Turks of Bulgaria and Pomaks. The newly independent state of Romania received the largest section of Dobruca, including all the territory to the north of Mangalya and the districts north-east of Silistre (i.e. approximately three fourths of the Dobrucan tableland) in return for Russia's annexation of Romanian lands in southern Bessarabia.

Approximately 30,000 Tatars and 20,000 Turks remained in the Romanian section of the Dobruca in the year 1880 after the great migration of 1877-78.[1] By the year 1900 the number of Tatars in the Romanian Dobruca had decreased slightly to 28,000 while the number of Romanians had risen dramatically to 120,000.[2]

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[1] Fredrick de Jong. "The Turks and Tatars of Romania." *Turcica. Revue d'Etudes Turques*. vol. 18. 1986. no. 27. p. 168. n. 26. For the most up to date work on the Tatars in Bulgaria and Romania see Ali Eminov. "Turks and Tatars in Bulgaria and the Balkans." *Nationalities Papers*. vol. 28. no. 1. 2000. pp. 130-166.

[2] Müstecib Ülküsal. *Dobruca ve Türkler*. Ankara; Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü. 1966. p. 33. The number of Tatars in the Romanian Dobruca had fallen

These statistics show that, far from showing a natural pattern of growth typical of traditional, patriarchal Muslim communities, the Turkish and Tatar population of the Romanian Dobruca was on the decline. There was a gradual decline in the Tatar population of Bulgarian Dobruca at this time as well and the Tatar population of this region had fallen from 15,000 in 1881 to 11,585 in 1910.[3] This number was to decline further when Bulgaria achieved full independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1908.[4]

Post 1878 Migrations from the Dobruca to the Ottoman Empire

The decline in the Tatar population of both the Bulgarian and Romanian sections of the Dobruca was the result of further migration to the Ottoman Empire from the 1880s to World War I. The continuing migration to the lands of the Sultan were caused by several factors. In 1883, for example, the Romanian government enacted a law calling for compulsory military service for all Romanian subjects. Thousands of Muslim Turks and Tatars migrated to Turkey (which became known as the *Devlet Baba* 'Father Land' by the Dobrucan Tatars) at this time for many of the same reasons that had led scores of Crimean Tatars to abandon the Russian Empire in the Crimean migration of 1874-75.[5] There was once again a fear among the religious Tatars that serving in a Christian army might pose a threat to Muslim identity, religious beliefs and *hilal* (food taboos). A second migration to the Ottoman Empire took place as the result of a devastating famine which swept through the Dobruca after a failed in harvest in 1899.[6] There were other factors leading to the migration to Turkey in this period as well. Attempts by Romanian authorities to vaccinate the Turks and Tatars, continued calls for *hijra* to the 'white soil' of the Ottoman Empire, a tendency for young Turks and Tatars to move to Istanbul to receive educations, discrimination by Romanian and Bulgarian authorities, and other complaints all led to a continuous trickle of migration from the Dobruca to Turkey.

slightly in the year 1911 to approximately 25,000 Tatars and the number of Turks to 10,000. Fredrick de Jong. op. cit. no. 1. p. 168.

[3] Raymond Detrez. *Historical Dictionary of Bulgaria*. London; Scarecrow Press. 1997. p. 315. Ulküsal. op. cit. no. 2. p. 45.

[4] Those Tatars who remained in the Bulgarian Dobruca were concentrated primarily in the countryside around the cities of Pazarcik and Balçik and in the north-eastern strip of Dobruca.

[5] Ülküsal. op. cit. no. 2. p. 29.

[6] Ibid. p. 30.

Perhaps the greatest catalyst for migration, however, was the enactment of a series of laws from 1880 to 1885 which led to the confiscation of land owned by Turks and Tatars in the Romanian Dobruca. Fredrick de Jong speaks of a 30 year long "reign of terror" in which the lands of Muslim landowners was sequestrated by Romanian officials.[7] Many Tatars and Turks also migrated from the Dobruca to Anatolia in the early 1900s as a result of the Balkan Wars of 1912-13.

The pace of migration to the Ottoman Empire picked up in the inter-war period which saw a vast emigration between 1937 and 1939 in particular. In the 1930s right wing Fascist organizations, such as the Iron Guard, terrorized Turkish and Tatar villagers in the Romanian Dobruca and tens of thousands of Tatars and Turks migrated from the Dobruca to Turkey during the late 1930s.[8] In 1938 22,141 Tatars remained in the Romanian Dobruca and, as a result of a massive Romanian settlement of this plain, they constituted a mere 2.7% of this land which had been overwhelmingly Muslim a half century earlier. By the year 1977 there were approximately 23,000 Turks and 23,000 Tatars in Romanian Dobruca.[9] The size of the Tatar population of the Romanian Dobruca has therefore remained rather constant from 1880 to 1980 hovering at between 20,000 and 28,000. In 1992, just under 25,000 Tatars were registered in Romania according to the official census but Nermin Erin calculates that the number may be as high as 40,000 when one includes those who did not register.[10]

Bulgarian sources usually put the number of Tatars remaining in Bulgarian Dobruca at somewhere between 5,000 and 6,000.[11] This number may, however, be an underestimate. Bulgarian authorities

[7] Fredrick de Jong. op, cit. no. 1. p. 169.

[8] Ibid. p. 172.

[9] Ibid. p. 175.

[10] Nermin Eren. "Crimean Tatar Communities Abroad." *The Tatars of the Crimea. Return to the Homeland*. ed. Edward Allworth. Durham; Duke University Press. 1998. p. 332. *Annarul Statistic al Ramaniei*. Bucharest; Comisia Nationala Pentru Statistica. 1994. p. 110.

[11] Zachary Irwin. "The Fate of Islam in the Balkans. A Comparison of Four State Policies." *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics*. ed. Pedro Ramet. Durham; Duke University Press. 1989. p. 396.

have noticed that thousands of Tatars in Bulgaria have intermarried with the larger Turkish population of the country or have identified themselves as Turks not Tatars. Nermin Eren states that the number of Tatars in Bulgaria is estimated to be under 20,000.[12]

Sustaining Crimean Tatar Identity in the Romanian Dobruca

While the Tatar population of Turkey was, like most Muslim groups from the Caucasus and Balkans, largely assimilated in the Turkish state building process, the Tatars of the Romanian Dobruca actively avoided assimilation by their Romanian Christian neighbors in much the same way they had in the Russian Empire. Religious customs, endogamy and outward markers of Islamic identity were consciously used to create barriers to assimilation against the larger Christian Romanian majority of the Dobruca. While it was the Dobrucan Tatars' sense of Islamic communal identity that initially prevented assimilation in the Romanian context, a national identity gradually emerged among the Dobrucan Tatars in the 20th century which acted as a further barrier to Romanization.

There was considerable communication between the Tatar communities of the Dobruca and Crimea on the eve of the Russian Revolution and nationalist leaders regularly circulated between Istanbul, the Crimea and the Dobruca in this period. Ismail Gasprinsky, the renowned Crimean Tatar editor and enlightener, for example, visited the Dobruca on his way to Bulgaria in 1895 and stayed in Constanta.[13] Copies of Gasprinksy's modernist newspaper *Tercüman* (The Translator) were read with great interest by Crimean Tatars in the Dobruca but Gasprinsky does not appear to have had much to do with this community himself.

As the Crimean Tatar intelligentsia in the Crimea itself began to identify the Crimean Tatars as a nation after 1906, many Dobrucan Tatar intellectuals also came to collectively identify themselves on the basis of their ethnicity and people's former homeland and hearth, the Crimean Peninsula. With their calls for secular reform and national unity, the programs of the Young Turks and later Young Tatars had great appeal for certain intellectual segments of the Dobrucan Tatar population.

[12] Nermin Eren. op. cit. no. 10. p. 331.
[13] Müstecib Ülküsal. op. cit. no. 2. p. 189.

While the Tatars and their Kipchak ancestors had inhabited the Dobruca since mid 11th century, this land was not, however, seen as the cradle of the Tatars nor was it imagined as a unique 'fatherland' by the Tatar nationalists of the Dobruca. The fact that the Dobruca was, by the early 20th century, largely Romanian and included in the Romanian national homeland may have prevented the Dobruca from being constructed in the Dobrucan Tatars' collective imagination as a Tatar homeland. The late date of settlement of the Dobruca by many Crimean Tatars and Nogais may also have precluded their imagination of this land as a Tatar homeland in the nationalist sense.

While there were many young writers, poets, teachers, and even some progressive *mullahs* who began the nationalist movement in the Dobruca, none is as celebrated as the renowned Tatar nationalist poet and educator, Mehmet Niyazi. Niyazi was born in a small village near Mangalya in the southern Romanian Dobruca in the tragic year 1878. Niyazi is credited with inculcating in his fellow Dobrucan Tatar countrymen a strong disaporic attachment to the Crimea and for founding several important journals, newspapers and cultural associations devoted to the Crimea.

Although Niyazi is known for a variety of his works which appeared in Dobrucan Tatar newspapers that began to appear in the 20th century (such as *Işik* 'The Lamp', *Dobruca Sadasi* 'Voice of the Dobruca', and *Mektep ve Aile*, 'The School and the Family') he is best known for a series of poems collected under the title of 'The Green Island' and 'The Green Homeland' which were written between 1900 and 1930. These works spoke of the attachment the Tatars of the Dobruca felt towards their former homeland across the Black Sea. The following is a typical stanza from this series devoted to the romanticized Crimean homeland:

> Gathered from the flowers of nature,
> You are a finely organized bouquet, 'Green Island'! *(Yeşil Ada)*
> Though at times your leaves may wither,
> I wonder whether there exists anything next to you in beauty?
> It is as if you have been beautified by a heavenly hand,
> And nourished with the purest of air.
> The waves gathering the glint of the seas,
> Kiss your feet night and day.
> With highest regard, they sprinkle this glistening...
> The vineyards and gardens follow suit...

Though the Crimea is very close to us,
We could not receive news from her for a long time.
Even though our eyes were filled with tears of longing
We could not find a way to the 'Green Homeland'. *(Yeşil Yurt)*[14]

A whole generation of Tatars in the Dobruca grew up reading Niyazi's work and many can still quote his poems which were recited in Tatar nationalist gathering throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

With the overthrow of the Crimean Tatar government in the Crimea by the Bolsheviks in 1918 the Dobruca became a refuge for many Crimean Tatar nationalists fleeing Bolshevik rule in the 'Green Homeland'. These political exiles played an important role in assisting Niyazi's cohorts in developing nationalist organizations in the Dobruca. Exiles who settled in the Dobruca during this period also agitated for Crimean Tatar independence during the inter-war period through such organizations as the *Prometheus* movement. This influx of Crimean Tatar political exiles gave the national movement of the Dobruca a new infusion of patriotism and added a distinctly political dimension to the Dobrucan Tatar links to the Crimea.

It was this new political movement which sought to establish a Crimean Tatar nation in the Crimea that seized the imagination of many Tatars of the Dobruca during and after World War I. As the Crimean Tatars fought to establish an independent state in the Crimea in 1917-1918 following the collapse of the Tsarist Empire, Niyazi and many other Dobrucan Tatar nationalists either supported their kin in the Crimea or traveled to partake in this historical event themselves.[15]

Upon his death in 1935, Mehmet Niyazi, the paramount leader of the Dobrucan Tatar community, was honored by the leaders of the national movement in the Romanian Dobruca for his life work. Niyazi's magnificent *mezar* (tomb) in the Dobrucan town of Mecidiye was perhaps the first of many Tatar graves to be engraved with the sign of the newly created Crimean Tatar nation, the royal seal of the Crimean khans, the *Tarak Tamgha*.

After Niyazi's death, the Dobrucan nationalist movement found

[14] Ibid. p. 195.

[15] The importance of the Dobrucan Tatar community to the national movement at this time can be seen in the fact that the Tatar nationalist leadership in the Crimea chose two members of the Dobrucan Tatar community, Said Mirza Pasha and Mahmut Esad Çelebizade, to represent their cause as unofficial ambassadors to the Axis side during World War I. Hakan Kirimli. *National Movements and National Identity Among the Crimean Tatars*. Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1996. p. 203.

a new leader in the form of a dynamic young lawyer, Müstecib Fazil Ülküsal. Ülküsal, who was born in the Dobrucan village of Azaplar near Constanta in 1899 to parents who migrated to the Dobruca from the Crimean steppe in 1862, began his career as a teacher in Constanta. In 1918 the 19 year old Ulkusal, like many Dobrucan Tatars, moved to the Crimea to teach in Bahçesaray. With the subsequent establishment of Soviet power in the Crimea, Ülküsal emigrated to Bucharest in 1920 where he earned a law degree. Ülküsal then returned to the Dobruca and revived the Crimean Tatar nationalist movement of Romania during the 1930s and 1940s by means of his diaspora journal *Emel* (Aspiration), which was published from 1930 in Constanta.[16]

Ülküsal and a small coterie of nationalists also fought to halt Tatar migration from the Dobruca to Turkey where Tatars ran a greater risk of being assimilated. Ülküsal similarly struggled to prevent the assimilation of those Tatars who remained in the Dobruca and encouraged Dobrucan Tatars to maintain their Crimean traditions in Romania.

Ülküsal's efforts to keep his community alive in the Dobruca have, since the return of the Crimean Tatars to the post-Soviet Crimea, been recognized by these returnees and Crimean Tatar language papers in the Crimea make repeated references to his accomplishments. Crimean Tatar leader Nadir Bekirov wrote in 1996 "Thanks to Müstecip Ülküsal and his compatriots *Emel* was the bearer of the soul of patriotism and a unifying factor in the Crimean Tatar diaspora."[17] Ülküsal, who died in Turkey in 1996 at the age of 97, lived long enough to see his people form a nation in their homeland during the Russian Revolution, he then witnessed the destruction of this nation in 1944 and joyfully partook in the return and rebirth of the Crimean Tatars after 1989.

Ülküsal's works aimed to evoke in their readers an attachment to the Tatars' former homeland across the Black Sea. In a typical excerpt this author attempted to demonstrate the importance of devotion to the Crimean homeland for Dobrucan Tatars whom he labeled 'Crimean Turks', as was the custom at the time:

[16] Alexander Popovich. "A Propos de la Revue Emel." *Altaica Collecta*. Weisbaden; Otto Harrassowitz. 1976. pp 194-198.

[17] Nadir Bekirov. "Zhizn' Posvishchennaia Narodu." *Golos Kryma*. Feb. 2. 1996. p. 5.

> The Crimean Turks who could no longer endure the destructive rule of the Tsar left their heavenly homeland and came to the Dobruca, yet they suffered from longing for their homeland. The Crimean Turks who came to the Dobruca worked on their land, soaked in blood and sweat and showed one another hovering birds. 'These birds must have seen our Crimea, ah, may we be birds and see her' they used to say.[18]

Ülküsal's insertion of nationalist imagery in describing his ancestors' links to their Crimean homeland is repeated over and over again by 20th Crimean Tatar nationalists. These Crimean Tatar nationalists painted the migrations from the Crimea and their ancestors' subsequent longing for this lost 'fatherland' in the nationalist colors of the time. The Crimean Tatar nationalist leader Edige Kirimal, for instance, describes the 19th century Crimean Muslims' patriotic links to their homeland in modern nationalist terms that would have been quite alien to the earlier, religiously-defined immigrants to the sacred soil of the Ottoman Caliph. In his work written after World War II in German, entitled *Der National Kampf der Krim Turken* (The National Struggle of the Crimean Turks) Kirimal wrote:

> The saddest songs of the Crimean Turks that ring in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, sing of the suffering of emigration. Some of these songs proclaim:
> 'Some of us lost our estates, and others those closest to them,
> Live well fatherland, we are leaving you.
> We find ourselves among foreigners, and sadness is our lot,
> Oh Fatherland, Fatherland, we give our life for you.'[19]

Interestingly enough, while the works of Ülküsal, Niyazi and others were influential in establishing a strong link to the Crimea as an imagined homeland among their Dobrucan kin (and in preventing the Romanization of the Dobrucan Tatars) it was perhaps Turkification that presented the greatest threat to the maintenance of Crimean Tatar identity in this land. As young Dobrucan Tatars traveled to Turkey to receive educations, inter-married with the neighboring Turkish population and adopted the popular Anatolian Turkish language, many Tatars lost their sense of Crimean Tatar identity. Ülküsal bemoaned this process in a typical piece:

> With time, as the Crimean migrants found some freedom and established routines, they began to progress economically in the Dobruca.

[18] Müstecib Ülküsal. op. cit. no. 2. p. 188.
[19] Edige Kirimal. *Der Nationale Kampf der Krim Türken*. Emsdetteen; Verlag Lechte. 1952. p XXIV.

> Unfortunately as the duration of the separation grew, they lost their memory of the Crimea and their love of the Crimea began to diminish. The fire that they brought with them from their homeland had not, however, completely died because the grandmothers and grandfathers retained their childhood memories and shed an abundance of tears.[20]

Through the efforts of the Dobrucan Tatar nationalists many young Tatars in Romania actively defended their culture, language and identity from Turkification as well as Romanization and refused to be assimilated by their 'host' culture. Events in Turkey, such as Kemal Ataturk's secular attack on traditional Islam also made Turkey less attractive for devout Tatars during the 1920s and 1930s. A whole generation of Dobrucan Tatars grew up in this period imaging the 'Green Island' as their people's homeland. Songs from the period reflect this growing attachment to the Crimean homeland. A popular song still sung by the Dobrucan Tatars that captured this attachment proclaimed "The Crimea, the Crimea, they say it is a Green Island. I was born there, my home is there" *(Kırım Kırım degenin bir yeşil ada. Men onda togdum, menim üyüm onda)*.[21]

For the most part, the largely innocuous, cultural brand of diasporic nationalism found among the small Dobrucan Tatar enclave does not seem to have been perceived by Romanian authorities as a threat and was tolerated in the pre-World War II period. The Romanian authorities also did not prevent intercourse with the Crimea, and many Dobrucan Tatars continued to be linked to the peninsula by family ties. In addition, the Dobruca also continued to offer a refuge for Tatars during the early Soviet period as the Crimean Tatars migrated to this area to avoid famines in the Crimea caused by collectivization and Soviet persecution during the 1920s and 1930s. The most notable migration took place in 1921 as thousands of Crimean Tatars fled to Romania to escape a famine in the Crimea.[22]

[20] Müstecib Ülküsal. op. cit. no. 2. p. 188.
[21] Song related to author by professor Kemal Karpat a unique source on Dobrucan history. Dr. Karpat grew up in this region in the 1930s.
[22] Alan Fisher. *The Crimean Tatars*. Stanford; Hoover Institution Press. 1978. p. 132.

The Crimean Tatars of the Romanian Dobruca During the Communist Era

The Dobruca's role as a sanctuary grew in importance during World War II. As the allied German and Romanian armies retreated from the Soviet Crimea in 1944, thousands of Crimean Tatars who feared Soviet retaliation for collaboration with the invaders fled with the retreating Axis armies to their kin in the Dobruca. The Crimean Tatar refugees fled the Crimea in two groups, one party was evacuated by sea while the other group followed the ancient path of the Nogais and migrated through Moldavia to Romania. Few from among those Crimean Tatars who took the sea route, however, survived their harrowing journey. The convoy conveying this group from the Crimea was attacked by Red Army aircraft *en route* to Romania and largely destroyed.[23]

A mere 2,000 Crimean Tatars actually succeeded in reaching the Dobruca at this time but their refuge there was to be short lived. In August of 1944 the Red Army occupied Romania itself and NKVD (the predecessor to the KGB) troops combed the Tatar villages of the Dobruca in search of Soviet citizens. Any Tatars found in the region without Romanian passports to prove that they were not from the Soviet Union were arrested and deported to Central Asia with the rest of the Crimean Tatar nation.[24] The leader of the Dobrucan Tatar assistance for Crimean Tatar refugees, Necip Haci Fazil (the brother of Müstecip Fazil Ülküsal) was soon thereafter arrested by the Red Army and executed while his brother fled to Turkey. The arrests of Dobrucan Tatar nationalists continued into the 1950s and any manifestation of political nationalism among this community was met with oppression by the Communist regime.[25]

After these initial purges, however, the Tatar community of Communist Romania fared quite well in comparison to their kin in the Bulgarian Dobruca. The poor relations at this time between NATO member Turkey and Warsaw Pact member Romania led to a an official cessation in migration from the Dobruca to the Republic of Turkey. The Romanian government actually promoted the

[23] Necip Abdulhamitoglu. *Türksüz Kırım. Yuz Binlerin Sürgün*. Bogazici Yayinlari. 1974. p. 63.

[24] Interview with Mehmet Sevdiyar, a leader of the Crimean Tatar nationalist movement during World War II. New York City, February 1999.

[25] Fredrick de Jong. op. cit. no. 1. p. 179.

maintenance of Tatar and Muslim identity in the Dobruca and used this community as a bridge to the nonaligned Muslim countries of the Third World.

An interesting propaganda piece from the Communist period published for distribution to Muslim countries entitled *Prezente Musulmane in Romania* (The Muslim Presence in Romania) presents the Muslim culture of the Dobrucan Turks and Tatars as a showcase. In an article by Iacub Mehmet, the '*Mufti* for the Romanian Cult of Islam', this author proudly wrote:

> In present day Romania the monuments of Muslim art, the same as the entire cultural heritage, are given every attention and protection by the Romanian State. In the past ten years alone, the monuments of the Adacale island have been removed to another island, the mosques of Mangalia and the Hunchiar Masjid in Constanta have been restored, and the Braila Museum has a collection of local objects of Oriental art...Thus, the descendants of those who built these monuments, Romanian citizens of Turkish and Tatar origin, can retrace their cultural traditions...All this points to the friendly ties between the Romanian people and all the Muslim peoples as well as the sympathy and concern the Romanians manifest and the support they give to the anti-imperialist struggle of the Arabs for their national independence.[26]

Interestingly enough, the Romanian government also took steps to prevent the assimilation of this community by the Turkish population of the Dobruca. For example, Tatar officials were promoted to high positions in the Romanian *Muftiat*-religious administration (based in Constanta) while the Turks were excluded from leadership positions; from 1947-1957 the Romanian government ran Tatar language schools in the Dobruca; books in Volga Tatar were imported for reviving the Tatar language and in 1955 a special Tatar alphabet was created for the Tatar community.[27] The Romanian government may have thus assisted the Tatars of its portion of Dobruca in avoiding assimilation during the Communist period.

While the Romanian government was tolerant of Islam among the Turks and Tatars, religion nevertheless began to lose its importance among the Dobrucan Tatars during the 1960s. Islam gradually lost its hold on the Dobrucan Tatars as the primary marker of identity under the combined assault of state sponsored atheism in classrooms and the more subtle threat of material progress, urbaniza-

[26] Iacub Mehmet. *Prezente Musulmane in Romania*. Bucharest; Meridiane. 1976. p. 24.

[27] Fredrick de Jong. op. cit. no. 1. p. 179.

tion and modernization. Important Islamic monuments in the Romanian Dobruca, such as the Gazi Ali Pasha Mosque complex in Babadağ, the Sultan Mecid Mosque in Mecidiye and the Mangalya Cami Mosque in Mangalya, were preserved by the Romanian government largely as cultural artifacts not as religious edifices. In many ways the loss of Islam as the main bearer of Dobrucan Tatar identity and this people's secularization can be seen as a gradual version of the same process that occurred forcefully among the Crimean Tatars of the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s.

Although the Tatar community of the Dobruca was, to a certain extent, looked down upon as uneducated by the neighboring Turks, many Tatars do seem to have taken advantage of the opportunities offered by a Socialist education to become white collar professionals. While the Tatars suffered to a certain extent from Communist misrule during the tenure of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu, this community was, for the most part, treated well by the country's Communist leadership. The Tatars and Turks of Dobruca were confronted with little of the anti-Muslim violence that threatened the Muslim communities of Bulgaria in the 1980s and the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

The Crimean Tatar Community of Romania in the Post-Communist Context

With the collapse of the Communist regime in Romania in 1989, the Dobrucan Tatar community has experienced something of a nationalist revival. The Romanian Tatars have, in particular, become vitally involved in the struggle of their kin in the former Soviet Union to return to the Crimea and rebuild their culture in their former homeland. Delegates from the Tatars of the Dobruca, for instance, attended the historic *Kurultay* (Congress) of the returning Crimean Tatars held in Simferopol, Crimea in 1991 and the Dobrucan Tatar community has offered considerable support to the Crimean Tatar repatriates. While in the Crimea in 1997, the author interviewed several Crimean Tatars who had been visited by long lost relatives from Romania and many Crimean Tatar repatriates to the Crimea appear to have reopened long severed links with kin living in the Dobruca.

The Tatars of the Dobruca are united in a diaspora organization known as the *Romanya Müsülman Tatar-Türklerinin Demokratik Birliği* (The Democratic Union of Tatar-Turkish Muslims of Romania). This

organization publishes a newspaper entitled *Kara Deniz* (The Black Sea) and a journal known as *Renkler* (Colors), both of which deal with Tatar affairs in the Crimea and Dobruca.[28]

The Dobrucan Tatar diaspora's growing links to the Crimea recently resulted in a ground breaking conference held in the Dobrucan city of Constanta in December of 1998. Presenters at the conference included Mustafa Dzhemilev (the chairman of the Crimean Tatar *Mejlis*-Parliament), Dr. Ahmet Ihsan Kirimli (the president of the Main Center for Cultural and Aid Associations of the Crimean Turks), and Sali Negeat (the president of the Romanian Muslim Tatar-Turkish Democratic Union).[29]

Other examples of growing links between the Tatar diaspora of the Dobruca and the Crimean homeland include a tour of the Dobruca by the Crimean Tatar dance troupe known as the *Kırım Ansamble* (Crimean Ensemble). In December of 1998, the *Kırım Ansamble* visited the Dobrucan cities of Constanta and Mecidiye before traveling to several cities in Turkey with Tatar populations such as Gebze, Kirikkale, Sangurlu, Konya and others.

While there is an ongoing effort to preserve the Crimean Tatar language of the Dobruca from Turkification, the diasporic nationalist movement of Romania is not, however, primarily based on linguistic nationalism (of the sort found among the Quebecois or the Welsh for example). The Dobrucan nationalist movement is rather a unique example of a (re-imagined) territorialized national identification. Dobrucan Tatars identify with the Crimean Peninsula in a territorial sense and young Dobrucan Tatars are encouraged to link themselves to this land through songs, books, and maps. This is, in many ways, an artificial attempt to construct the 'Green Isle' of the Crimea as a homeland in the Dobrucan Tatars' collective imagination. Nermin Eren comments on this facet of diasporic Tatar nationalism in his interesting article. According to this Tatar source:

> As with other émigré communities, attachment to a particular locality and reminiscences deriving from that place ensure continuation of an identity. Similarly, the 'homeland Crimea' *(Vatan Kırım)* in the

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[28] Nermin Eren. op. cit. no. 10. p. 332.

[29] Talks at the conference included, among others, Unver Sel's "Migrations from the Crimea to the Dobruca and Anatolia", Pejami Menlibay's "Nogais of the Dobruca, Yesterday and Today", Yakin Bektore's "The Image of the Tatar in Turkey", Zafer Karatay's "The Crimean Tatar Diaspora and the Crimea" and Mustafa Dzhemilev's "The Actual Situation of the Crimea Today."

> collective memory of émigré communities kept Tatar identity alive. This is evident in the form of the émigré identity whether the component is Tatar or Turkish. It is also reflected in such Tatar songs as *Güzel Kirım* ('Beautiful Crimea') as well as in émigré poetry, where reference to the homeland as the *Yeshil Ada* (green island), *Yeshil Toprak* (green soil), and *Vatan* (homeland) occurs. The word *vatan* is reserved only for Crimea among émigré communities, even though many of the individuals making up those communities were born elsewhere and are citizens of another country.[30]

The level of identification with the Crimean homeland and the Crimean Tatar nation has certainly risen as a result of these efforts designed to foster an imaginary link to the Crimean Peninsula among the Dobrucan Tatars. Happenings in the Crimea have tremendous impact among many segments of the Dobrucan Tatar community and many Dobrucan Tatars identify with the Crimean Tatar leaders in particular. A recent visitor to the Dobruca noticed that Crimean Tatar nationalist leaders, such as Mustafa Dzhemilev, have become minor celebrities among the Dobrucan Tatars.

After visiting the Romanian Dobruca in the summer of 1996, Svetlana Chervonnaia mentioned that Mustafa Dzhemilev, the head of the Crimean Tatar *Mejlis*, had come to have the same importance as the greatest heroes of the Crimean Tatar nationalist pantheon, such as Ismail Gaspirinsky (the first great Crimean Tatar modernist) and Numan Çelebi Cihan (the martyred president of the short lived Crimean Tatar state of 1917). This author pointed out that:

> In an expedition which the author undertook in the summer of 1996 in the districts where the Tatars are compactly living in Romania, in poor fishing villages and settlements, in the suburbs of Constanta, the Tatars, the descendants of emigrants from the Crimea, Romanian citizens, are not unaffected by current politics of *Mejlis* or the mood of its president; they led their children to me and said to them 'Touch her hands, this woman met with Mustafa and Mustafa granted her his hand.' In the building of the only Tatar-Muslim center in Constanta, four portraits hang...that of Ismail Gasprinsky, Kemal Ataturk, Numan Çelebi Cihan and Mustafa Dzhemilev.[31]

This strengthening of identification with the Crimea by the Tatars of the Dobrucan diaspora will certainly assist this community in its efforts to preserve its identity and culture from assimilation. Although

[30] Ibid. p. 338.

[31] Svetlana Chervonnaia. *Krym 97. Kurultai Protiv Raskola.* Moscow; Rossiiskaia Akademiia Nauk. 1998. p. 19.

the Tatar community of the Dobruca has undergone considerable Turkification (most young Romanian Tatars now speak better Turkish than Tatar) many segments of the Tatar population of the Dobruca will certainly function as an archetypal diaspora group into the foreseeable future. The Romanian government has no interest in Romanizing this community and the Romanian Tatars' lack of intermarriage with the Romanians will certainly prevent them from being Romanized in the near future. In addition, a slight upsurge in cultural Islam among the Romanian Tatars since the collapse of the Communist regime can only help create additional barriers to Romanization, although this may facilitate greater Turkification. While there are no more than 25-40,000 Tatars in the Dobruca today, this small community can also play a key role in lobbying its government to support the Crimean Tatars in the Crimean 'homeland' and can, by its own efforts, offer considerable assistance to the Crimean Tatars in the 'Green Isle' as they attempt to reestablish themselves in the post-Soviet Crimea.

The Tatar Community of the Bulgarian Dobruca

The Bulgarian government has shown itself less amiable to the existence of a large Muslim minority within its territorial boundaries.[32] This may stem from the fact that the 1 million Turks of Bulgaria (12 percent of the country) were seen as a sizable threat to Bulgaria whereas in Romania their numbers were insignificant. In the sparsely inhabited Bulgarian Dobruca itself, the Turks and Tatars made up a majority of the population in six of the seven districts even after the events of 1878.[33]

The fate of the Tatar community in Bulgaria has many parallels with that of the Romanian Tatars. Traditionally the Tatars of Bulgaria were seen as an agrarian religious community with low levels of literacy. Life in Turkish and Tatar villages usually revolved around

[32] Ali Eminov. *Turkish and other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria.* New York; Routledge. 1997. p. 4.

[33] Bilal Simsir. *Contribution a l'Histoire des Populations Turques en Bulgarie, 1876-1880.* Ankara; Türk Kültürünü Arastirma Enstitüsü. p. 9. For an insightful analysis of the Turks in Bulgaria see Wolfgan Hopken's "From Religious Identity to Ethnic Mobilization. The Turks of Bulgaria Before, Under and Since Communism." *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State.* ed. Hugh Poulton. London; Hurst and co. 1997.

the local mosque and *hojas* (religious teachers) had considerable influence in their communities right up until the Communist era. As in Romania, serving in the Christian Bulgarian army was seen as a form of discrimination by Dobrucan Tatars and the oppressive policies of the Bulgarian government served to enhance the Tatars' sense of religious identity.

As in Romania, the Tatar community of Bulgaria experienced a considerable loss of land in the 19th century as the Bulgarian state commenced a two decade long period of land confiscations in its portion of the Dobruca. This process was designed to destroy the Dobrucan Tatars and Turks' domination of agriculture in this northeastern region of the country which was slated to become the bread basket of Bulgaria. As in the Romanian Dobruca, a state-sponsored program designed to eradicate Muslim dominance in this region was launched and the Bulgarian Dobruca underwent a considerable process of Bulgarization during the early 20th century. In a short period of time the Dobrucan tableland was in effect transformed into Bulgaria's primary grain growing area and the local Turks and Tatars were largely marginalized in the process.

The Bulgarization of the Dobruca area was increased during the Communist period. The Dobruca was seen as an strategic frontier zone and the Bulgarian government did not trust the large Muslim population situated in this region. In 1950 the Communist regime began a policy of forced collectivization which deprived the Dobrucan Turks and Tatars of much of their land. When the Tatar and Turkish villagers resisted they were expelled from Bulgaria by force in the tens of thousands. After the expulsions from the Dobruca, Bulgarian peasants were subsequently transferred to the region and settled in farms vacated by Turkish and Tatar farmers.

While the Communist regime in Bulgaria deprived the Tatars of much of their land they did, however, initially recognize them as a minority and this facilitated the maintenance of Tatar identity. From 1944-1956 the Bulgarian authorities in fact promoted ethnic identities in Bulgaria in much the same way as the Soviets had done earlier in the USSR.[34] As in Stalin's case, however, the Bulgarian authorities soon realized that this was creating ethnically-based identities that could challenge the central Bulgarian identity and the government soon canceled these programs.

[34] Ibid. The stated goal of this project was the creation of several 'socialist minorities' in Bulgaria.

As in Romania, the Bulgarian state also sought to prevent the Turkification of the small Tatar community. During the 1980s the Bulgarian government issued a decree designed to prevent the Turkification of the approximately 5,000-6,000 Tatars by the larger Turkish population of Bulgaria.[35] This decree entitled an "Endorsement of measures against the Turkish self-identification of Gypsies, Tatars, and Bulgarians professing the Mohammedan religion" was designed to prevent Tatars and other non-Turkish Muslims of Bulgaria from fraternizing with Turks in schools, universities, factories and the military since it was felt this led to their Turkification (and thus added to the numerical strength of Bulgaria's largest and most mobilized Muslim minority).[36]

Despite these efforts, a Bulgarian source claims that "tens of thousands" of Bulgarian Tatars were assimilated by the Turkish majority during the Communist era.[37] The complete breakdown of a separate Tatar identity by the remaining Tatars in Bulgaria may have only been prevented by the Tatars' practice of living in separate village quarters known as *Tatar Mahalleleri* (Tatar Neighborhoods).

As in Romania, the Tatars of Bulgaria also had a tradition of migration to Turkey during times of hardship. Noticeable migrations to Turkey occurred in 1951, 1968-74 and 1978. Those who migrated to Turkey at this time largely settled in Bursa and the Gazi Osman Pasha district of Istanbul and appear to have been quickly Turkified.[38]

State-Sponsored Efforts to Eradicate Tatar-Muslim Identity in Bulgaria in the 1980s

By the mid 1980s, the Bulgarian Communist regime's position on the Tatars and other Muslim minorities of the country (Gypsies,

[35] Eminov op. cit. no. 32. p. 7.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Margret Bainbridge. *The Turkic Peoples of the World*. London; Kegan Paul. 1993. p. 45. An American source from the early 1950s mentions the Turkification of the Bulgarian Tatars (who are of course predominately of Nogai descent) "More oriental in appearance than most Turks or Bulgarians, the Tatars retain distinctly Mongoloid characteristics of eye shape, complexion, and facial bone structure" but "The Tatars speak Turkish and are generally mixed in with the Turks in villages and towns." Huey Louis Kostanick. *Turkish Resettlement of Bulgarian Turks 1950-1953*. Berkeley; University of California Press. 1957. p. 79.
[38] Nermin Eren. op. cit. no. 10. p. 331.

Pomaks, and Turks) had changed dramatically. In 1984 the Bulgarian authorities surprised the world by proclaiming that there were no Turkish inhabitants in Bulgaria and that all Muslims in Bulgaria were in fact 'Islamized Bulgarians'. The Bulgarian authorities subsequently began a process of mass forced assimilation and Bulgarization of Bulgarian Muslims which was absurdly described as "a spontaneous rediscovery of true Bulgarian identity." There was an almost total blackout on information concerning this program during the late 1980s despite international outrage over this action.

While the government set out to prove that the Turks of the country were actually 'Bulgarians who were forcefully converted to Islam during the Ottoman period' they certainly could not refute the Dobrucan Tatars' non-Bulgar origins. Regardless, the Bulgarian government began a brutal assault on its Muslim minorities that began with a campaign designed to destroy the outward manifestations of all Muslim identity in Bulgaria, including that of the Tatars. In December of 1984 all Turks, Tatars, Pomaks and Gypsies were forced to adopt Bulgarian names and by March of the following year the government could confidently declare that Bulgaria was a homogenous country with no Muslim minorities.

This so called 'rebirth' campaign began in the Dobruca in 1984 and actually began with an attack on the small Tatar community.[39] Tatar villages were surrounded by paramilitary units and all Tatars were forced to change their Arabic-Tatar names (an important marker of Muslim identity) to Christian-Bulgarian names. In addition, traditional Muslim attire (such as fezes, baggy pants known as *salwars*, women's head shawls etc.) were outlawed, Muslim cemeteries were destroyed and those who resisted were arrested and deported. Pedro Ramet claims that "By the end of 1985, Muslim culture in Bulgaria was shattered."[40] The destruction of Muslim culture in Bulgaria in the mid 1980s did not take place without a certain amount of violence and resistance and Western newspapers frequently reported on the Bulgarian Turks' resistance to this campaign. The following account is typical:

[39] Erhard Franz. *Population Policy in Turkey*. Hamburg; Deutch-Orient Institut. 1994. p. 257.

[40] Pedro Ramet. "The Interplay of Religious Policy and Nationalities Policy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe." *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics*. Durham; Duke University Press. 1989. p. 33.

> In a recent bloody incident which came to light last week, tanks invaded the town of Yoblonovo at the eastern end of the Balkan range in the early hours of January 12. The town was sealed off by government militia...The 1,800 Turkish townsfolk had met before the raid and decided to resist the name changing operation, which has been mounted to minimize the size of the Turkish minority in Bulgarian census results later this year. When asked to sign documents to take on Bulgarian names, the people refused. According to another reliable eyewitness, some 30 Turks were machine-gunned. After the shooting, the troops brought in bulldozers and explosives and leveled the houses of those who refused to cooperate, some of the homes with their residents inside them...The Yoblonovo incident is only one of many reports of violence received by Western diplomats who believe the death toll has reached 500.[41]

While many Turkish villagers fought against the campaign in several widely reported clashes, the Tatar villages around Varna, Tolbukhin and Burgas did not forcefully resist the forced Bulgarization campaign.[42] As many as 300,000 Turks fled or were deported to Turkey during this campaign and it can be assumed that some Bulgarian Tatars also migrated or were expelled to Turkey during this period. Interestingly enough, those Muslims who remained in Bulgaria reacted to the Bulgarian government's campaign by actively making efforts to speak only Turkish amongst themselves and by actively ridding their vocabulary of Bulgarian words that had made their way into their language over the centuries. The Bulgarian state's attempts to Bulgarize its Muslim minority may have thus actually served to enhance this group's sense of ethno-religious identity *vis a vis* the Bulgarian majority.[43]

The Dobrucan Tatars' desperate position in Bulgaria began to improve with the collapse of the Zhikov's Communist regime in 1989. With the fall of the Communist regime, the Tatars and other Muslims of Bulgaria retrieved their Muslim names and have been officially recognized by the new state.[44] Muslims in Bulgaria have also

[41] "Violence in Bulgaria." *The Sunday Times*. February 17, 1985. pp. 1-2.

[42] Fredrick de Jong. "The Muslim Minorities in the Balkans." *Islamic Studies*. vol. 36: 2, no. 3. 1997. p. 419.

[43] Kemal Karpat. "The Turks of Bulgaria: The Struggle for National-Religious Survival of a Muslim Minority." *Nationalities Papers*. vol. 23. no. 4. 1995. p. 728.

[44] Since 1989, when Bulgaria reinstated Turkish rights, some right wing Bulgarian nationalists have, however, called for the deportation of Muslims from Bulgaria and have protested against the reinstatement of their cultural rights. Ali Eminov. op. cit. no. 32. pp. 15-20.

reopened Turkish language schools and mosques and have begun to reestablish their culture. By 1994, 129 new mosques had been built in Bulgaria despite the anti-Muslim rhetoric of Bulgarian ultra-nationalists who decried the threat of 'Islamic fundamentalism.'

In December of 1997 the Bulgarian government accepted Tatar members into the newly established National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues which, for the first time, deals with the rights of Muslim minorities in Bulgaria.[45] The Tatars have joined with the other Muslim minorities of Bulgaria including the Roma (Gypsies) in creating a united political party known as the Movement for Rights and Freedom to defend their rights and have, of late, begun to be courted by Bulgarian politicians who seek this powerful bloc's support in elections.[46]

These political developments were paralleled by a cultural revival among the Tatars of the Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Tatars have, for example, organized a cultural association known by the Nogai name *Asabay* (Relatives) which links the Bulgarian Tatars to the Crimean Tatars and their tragedies. The Tatars of the Bulgarian Dobruca have also once again begun to celebrate the spring festival of *Tepreş* and have begun annual commemorations of the 1944 deportation of the Crimean Tatars on May 18th.

This diasporic use of commemoration of a tragedy is a unique example of the deliberate construction of collective memory as a means for sustaining and promoting ethno-national identity in diaspora. The simultaneous commemoration the *Kara Gün* ('Black Day' of the deportation) by the Tatars of Bulgaria in the Dobrucan towns of Silistre, Akkadinlar, Vetva, and Pazarcik (in central Bulgaria) link these diasporic Tatars with their 'countrymen' who also commemorate this tragedy in Turkey, Romania, the Crimea and the USA. The 50th anniversary of the Black Day on May 18, 1994, was cause for particularly large commemorations in the Bulgarian Dobruca and throughout Turkey and the Crimea.[47] As in Romania, the cultural

[45] Maria Koinova. "Bulgarian Government Courting Minorities." *Turkestan Newsletter*. vol. 3. 014. Feb. 1. 1999.

[46] The Movement for Rights and Freedom, with 100,000 members is in fact the second largest political party in post-Communist Bulgaria.

[47] E. Seydamet. "Eski Şehir Milletvekil Hüseyin Aksoy'un 26 Mayis 1994 Tarihinde Kirim Tatarlarinin Vatanlarindan Sürgünün 50 Yil Münasbetiyle." *Emel*. May-June. 1994. no. 203. p. 10.

rebirth of the Bulgarian Tatars has been facilitated by growing contacts with the Crimea and increasing interest in the fate of the Crimean Tatar population in the Crimean Peninsula. While the Bulgarian Tatars have, like their kin in Romania, experienced considerable Turkification in the previous decades, they have begun to actively identify themselves as Tatars and to foster a distinct Crimean Tatar culture as a means of avoiding assimilation. While the future of the small, largely Turkified Tatar community of the Bulgaria is not as secure as that of the Romanian Dobruca, the political and cultural revival of this group in the 1990s bodes well for the continued existence of a Tatar presence in Bulgaria.

In the cases of both the Tatar community of the Dobruca and that of Turkey it can hardly be doubted that it was the rise of a Tatar nationalist movement in the Crimean Peninsula itself in the early 20th century that prevented the total assimilation of these diaspora groups in succeeding decades. As the parent community in the Crimean Peninsula came to identify itself on the basis of its ethnicity on the eve of World War I, many Crimean Tatars in the newly forming nation states of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey similarly came to identify themselves with their Crimean 'homeland' and with their previously passive sense of Crimean Tatar ethnicity.

This extraordinary process, which saw the religious identity of the Crimean Muslims superseded by a nationalist interpretation of community and homeland, began in the New Method schools established by the Crimean Tatar reformist educator, Ismail Gasprinsky (Gaspirali) in Bahçesaray. From there it spread to the coffee houses of Tatar enclave of Karasu Bazaar in the eastern Crimea where young Crimean Tatar nationalists took the great reformer's ideas to a political level and began to identify their people as a nation.

Bahçesaray of the late 19th century and early 20th century was, like its great teacher, Gasprinsky, a mixture of the old and the new. With its ancient, traditionalist *medreses*, (such as the famed bastion of Islamic conservatism, the Zinjirli Islamic Seminary), on the one hand, and its growing Russian presence, typified by the appearance of Russian newspapers, electricity, Russian police officers and city officials, on the other hand, Bahçesaray was destined to be the hearth for the forging of a hybrid movement that was to combine the worlds of the Russians and Tatars in reshaping the Crimean Muslims' identity. The Russified Ismail Gasprinsky was the product of this city

where ancient Crimean Islam was slowly beginning to come into contact with ways of the modernizing West in the form of Russian culture.

While hundreds of thousands of their kin had begun to rebuild their lives in the Dobruca and Turkey in the 19th century, it was in the dying homeland of the Crimean Tatars (and in the ancient capital of the Crimean Khans) that a group of Crimean Tatars were to launch a movement that was to transform the identity of Crimean Tatars both in the Crimea and in the diaspora. This movement, which was begun by the modernist Tatar reformer, Ismail Gasprinsky, was to originally call for the creation of a vast Eurasian Pan-Turkist nation based on a shared religion and (for the first time) a shared sense of language and ethnicity. Gasprinsky dreamed of nothing less than uniting the world's Turkic Muslim peoples into one trans-continental ethno-cultural nation.

This ambitious reformer's attack on the old ways and his efforts to unite the Turkic peoples of the Russian Empire and Turkey on an ethno-linguistic basis paved the way for the rise of more narrowly focused, ethnicity-based movement among some of his protégés and rivals. This latter group was to dismiss Gasprinsky's agenda as unrealistic and to focus on constructing a narrower nation made up solely of the Tatar inhabitants of the Crimea. It was this newly emerging national movement that was to begin the transformation of this closed community of passive peasants into a modern nation.

CHAPTER TEN

VATAN. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CRIMEAN TATAR HOMELAND

While the identity of the Crimean Tatars of the 19th century was largely shaped by an inward-looking, traditionalist Islam, it was nationalism, a Western 'Christian' socio-political construct that was to shape this people's identity in the succeeding century. In one of the most remarkable social transformations in East European history, the small, dying Tatar-Muslim ethnos of the Crimean Peninsula underwent a socio-political revival that was to completely alter their conceptualization of themselves as a community and, in the process, to reshape their connection to their native land. In the span of a lifetime this politically apathetic, religiously-defined people was to evolve into one of the most secular, politically mobilized nations in the world. With this transformation came a concomitant territorialization of the Crimean Tatar communal identity as the Crimean Peninsula came to be constructed as a Fatherland by an indigenous Tatar intelligentsia.

In the case of the Crimean Tatars, the imagining of the Crimean Peninsula as a homeland and the Crimean Muslims as a nation was closely linked to a cultural reform movement begun by the great educator and writer Ismail Gasprinsky (1851-1914). While Gasprinsky was not himself a narrowly focused nationalist entrepreneur, his work laid the social foundation for the forging of a narrow Crimean Tatar national movement in the Russian Empire.

Ismail Gasprinsky, 'Russian Collaborator' or 'Father of a Nation?'

In dealing with a man of Gasprinsky's stature there are of course bound to be differing historical interpretations and, not surprisingly, these often pit Soviet accounts of Gasprinsky's life against Crimean Tatar accounts. Ismail Gasprinsky (or Gaspirali, the Tatar version of his name), the first Crimean Tatar of any real historical significance in Crimean history since the reign of Şahin Giray Khan, was

born into a lower class *mirza* family in the village of Avciköy (Hunter's Village), Bahçesaray district, in 1851. Growing up in this slightly privileged household enabled the young Gasprinsky to attend the Zinjirli Medresse in Bahçesaray and the prestigious Voronezh military academy in Moscow as a teenager. This, and later experiences, such as spending time learning under the Pan-Slavist Ivan Katkov and working for the great Russian author Ivan Turgenev in Paris, as well as travels to the modernizing Ottoman Empire of the late 19th century, exposed the young Gasprinsky to a changing, modernizing world that most of his simple Crimean Tatar compatriots were unfamiliar with. Most importantly, these experiences convinced Gasprinsky that his moribund people, and indeed all Turkic-Muslim groups in the Russian Empire (such as the Azerbaijanis, Volga Tatars, Kazakhs, Uzbeks etc), were in need of reform as a means to cultural rejuvenation and socio-economic salvation.

Gasprinsky felt that 'his people' (a term which he gradually applied to *all* Turkic-Muslims in the Russian Empire) were dying in a cultural sense under the stifling stranglehold of reactionary, conservative Islam. In this respect Gasprinsky was not alone. A reformist movement had begun among the Volga Tatars at this same time led by Shihab al-Din Marjani (1815-1889), who showed Russian Muslims that modern science was compatible with Islam, and Abd al-Qaiyum al-Nasiri (1825-1902), who taught that the Tatar vernacular language could be used in writing in addition to the holy script of Arabic. Along with Gaspirali, these and other Volga Tatar modernists made the "almost inevitable" comparison between the cultural progress of Western Christian nations and the decaying condition of Muslim life in Russia. They concluded that some borrowing from, and accommodation with, Western ideas was necessary for the very survival of their community.[1]

Gasprinsky saw the Russian Muslims' inward looking, traditionalist educational system as the main barrier to his people's accommodation with Western progress and modernization. Gasprinsky once commented that "it is an indisputable fact that the contemporary Muslims are the most backward peoples. They have been left behind in virtually every area of life by Armenians, Bulgarians, Jews

[1] Edward Lazzerini. "Gadidism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century." *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Sovietique.* vol. 15. no. 2. p. 246. Zeki Togan. "Gaspirali, Ismail. *Encyclopaedia of Islam.* vol. 2. Leiden; EJ Brill. 1965. pp. 979-981.

and Hindus."[2] With the aim of improving his people's educational status and introducing them to modern culture, in 1884 Gasprinsky embarked on an ambitious program of educational reform that was to completely reshape Muslim education in the Russian Empire and beyond. Gasprinsky and a growing number of like minded associates opened a series of New Method *(Usul-i Jadid)* schools in the Crimean Peninsula that were to spread throughout the Russian Empire and revolutionize the outdated educational system of the Islamic *mektebs* and *medreses* of Russia.

Gasprinsky's followers who sought to modernize their atrophied Turkic Muslim society took their name, *Jadids* (Modernists), from the term *Usul-i Jadid.* By the time of Gasprinsky's death he would have the satisfaction of knowing that more than 5,000 of his New Method schools, with their revolutionary modern curriculums, had been established in the Russian Empire.

In addition to this remarkable achievement, in 1883 Gasprinsky started the first newspaper in Crimean Tatar history, known as *Tercüman* (the Translator), which became widely read by Muslims throughout the Russian Empire. In the pages of his paper, Gasprinsky patiently opened his simple readers' minds to the greater world, subtly attacked religious obscurantism, fought for the liberation of women in Muslim society, and called for greater cross-cultural sharing and contacts between the Russians and the Empire's large Turco-Muslim population.

In both of these endeavors Gasprinsky and his *Jadid* supporters had to walk a fine line between offending the sensibilities of the conservative Islamic *ulema* (clergy), which still exerted considerable control over the Muslim peasantry of the Russian Empire, and, more importantly, the watchful eye of the Russian government's censors. This second task was made easier by the fact that Gasprinsky did appear to have a genuine appreciation for Russia and its people's culture. Throughout the pages of his newspaper Gasprinsky called for rapprochement *(sblizhenie)* between the Muslims of the Russian Empire and the Russians and his work can hardly be described as anti-colonial (that is, anti-Russian) or militantly nationalistic.

In a typical article, Gasprinsky wrote "The Russian, thanks to his

[2] Alan Fisher. "A Model Leader for Asia. Ismail Gaspirali." *The Tatars of the Crimea. Return to the Homeland.* Durham; Duke University Press. 1998. p. 34.

fortunately composed character lives as 'his own' and 'as a native', not only among us Crimeans, but also as we have the opportunity to observe, in both the Caucasus and Central Asia. Therefore, thank God, amongst our Muslim peoples there is no feeling towards the Russians other than good will."[3] Gasprinsky's admiration for things Russian (i.e. modern) went so far that, on one occasion, he claimed "There are those who say that I am more of a Russian than is a Muscovite."[4]

Seen in this light, Gasprinsky's contemporary critics, most of whom were conservative *mullahs* defending the old order, considered this enlightener to be nothing more than a dangerous emissary of Russification. Gasprinsky's revolutionary efforts were constantly bedeviled by those who saw in this Russified Tatar and his plans for rapprochement with the Russians a threat to their Islamic identity and he was called everything from a Russophile to a heretic by his critics.

Interestingly enough Gasprinsky was also rejected by the first generation of Turco-Muslim nationalists, who emerged in the Russian Empire on the eve of the Empire's collapse, for not being revolutionary enough. Gasprinsky's cautious stand against revolutionary political movements calling for autonomy and national independence resulted in his being labeled a "lackey of the autocracy" by those who disdained his desire to work within the Tsarist system for the betterment of his community.[5]

Gasprinsky, who died in 1914, received a more favorable light during the first decade of the Soviet period. He was pictured in early Soviet works as a modernist whose efforts to enlighten the backward Muslims of the Russian Empire coincided with the Soviets' own objectives. The Soviet regime turned Gasprinsky's residence in Bahçesaray into a museum and promoted this figure as a Socialist hero.

With Josef Stalin's attack on 'nationalist deviation' among the

[3] "Blizost Russkikh." *Tercüman.* no. 29 July 28, 1903. p. 124.

[4] It should also be stated that Gasprinsky always used the Russian version of his name not the Tatar version, Gaspirali, in his writings (hence my usage of this variant of his name) and he appears to have actually known how to write in Russian better than Tatar or Turkish. Edward Lazzerini. *Ismail Bey Gasprinskii and Muslim Modernism in Russia, 1878-1914.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Dept. of History. University of Washington. 1973. p. 36.

[5] Hakan Kirimli. *National Movements and National Identity Among the Crimean Tatars.* Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1996. p. 92.

Crimean Tatars and other Soviet nations in the 1930s, however, Gasprinsky's role as a socialist icon came to an abrupt end. Gasprinsky was subsequently "repressed in death" and his house-museum was closed in 1930.[6] By the mid 1930s Gasprinsky began to appear in Soviet publications as a stooge of the Tsarist government and a representative of the exploitive bourgeois class. The Soviet Islamicist, Liutsian Klimovich, led the broadside against Gasprinsky, whom he labeled "the most spectacular spokesman of the Tatar bourgeois exploiters" in his work *Islam in Tsarist Russia (Islam v Tsarskoi Rossii).*[7] In this work, Klimovich wrote:

> Thus, in both the question of domestic and foreign policies of the Russian autocracy, the *jadid* Gasprinsky was completely trusted (by the authorities). What were included in the 'specifics' of his teachings? What was the other face of Gasprinsky, that minstrel of Russian war-feudal imperialism? Gasprinsky appeared as the ideologue of the growing Tatar bourgeoisie, in particular expressing the interests of its liberal circles.[8]

In addition, Klimovich claimed that Gasprinsky made "a considerable effort in order to reinforce Russian Tsarism, which had appeared as a nightmare for all peoples."[9]

After the 1944 deportation of the Crimean Tatars, Gasprinsky's name disappeared from Soviet history books and it is only since 1989 that the Crimean Tatars have begun to rediscover their most famous native son.[10] The Crimean Tatars who are currently rebuilding their society in the Crimean Peninsula have, interestingly enough, constructed an image of Gasprinsky that portrays him as the founder of Crimean Tatar nationalism and the father of the Crimean Tatar nation. The Crimean Tatars of the diaspora also see Gasprinsky in

[6] I.A. Zaatov. "Rasskazhite ob Ismaile Gasprinskom" *Krymskaia ASSR 1921-1945.* Simferopol; Tavria. 1990. p. 23.

[7] Liutsian Klimovich. *Islam v Tsarskoi Rossii.* Moscow; State Antireligious Press. 1936. p. 181

[8] Ibid. pp. 185-186.

[9] Ibid. p. 183. and p. 287.

[10] The erroneous depiction of Gasprinsky as a Russian pawn has, however, continued to this very day. In a 1998 article entitled "Unknown Aspects of the Jadidists" *(Cedidcilerin Bilinmiyen Yonleri),* which appeared in the conservative Turkish journal *History and Civilization (Tarih ve Medeniyet)* Alaeddin Yalcinkaya, for example, attacked Gasprinsky as a Russian agent. This author claimed that Gasprinsky represented a more subtle threat to the Muslims of Russia than the Russian government itself. Alaeddin Yalcinkaya. "Cedidcilerin Bilinmiyen Yonleri." *Tarih ve Medeniyet.* Oct. 1998. pp. 22-27.

this light as can be seen from Arin Engin's description of his contributions. Engin claims:

> He began to spread the first light through his magazines and the newspaper *'Tercüman'* and started to show the Turks the road to nationalism and civilization. Thanks to the signaling of this great leader as well as the freedom movements beginning in Russia, the Crimean Turkish youth found its nationalistic conscience and began to organize political organizations.[11]

Signs of Gasprinsky's new found importance to Crimean Tatar nationalism appear everywhere in the Crimea today: Gasprinsky's house in Bahçesaray has once again been turned into a museum; a memorial stone (with a plaque announcing that a larger monument will be built on the location) has been placed on his grave site in Bahçesaray; one of the largest Crimean Tatar settlements in the Crimea (located in the suburbs of Evpatoriia) has been named Ismail Bey (*bey* is an honorific title); a Crimean Tatar library, known as the Gaspirali library, has been opened up in Simferopol with international support; an international symposium on Gasprinsky was held in Simferopol in March of 1991 (the 140th anniversary of Gasprinsky's birth) and a generation of Crimean Tatar children are being taught that Gasprinsky forged their nation through his reform programs of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[12] In his struggle against Muslim obscurantism and his attempts to unite and secularize his nation, Gasprinsky has been cast in the guise of a Crimean Ataturk.

The truth concerning Gasprinsky's views of the Russians and his role in forging the Crimean Tatar nation lies somewhere in-between the interpretations of this leader as a 'Russifier' and the 'founding father of the Crimean Tatar nation.'

[11] Arin Engin. *The Voice of Turkism.* Istanbul; Ataturkist Cultural Publications. no. 18. 1964. p. 35.

[12] For a synopsis of talks given at this symposium see. S. M. Chervonnaia. "Ismail Gasprinskii-Vydaiushchiicia Krymskotatarskii Prosvetitel' i Gumanist." *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie.* Jan.-Feb. no. 1. 1992. pp. 158-165.

Gasprinsky's New Method Schools as a Challenge to Traditional Bases of Crimean Muslim Identity

In order to fully appreciate Gasprinsky's role in forging a modern Crimean Tatar identity a background assessment of the world he began his work in is a prerequisite. As should be apparent from the previous chapters, one must in particular take into consideration the role that conservative Islam played in shaping the communal identity of the late 19th century Crimean Muslims. Most importantly, the role of traditionalist Islam in preventing modernization among the Crimean Muslims should be mentioned. Few Crimean Tatars at this time were willing to learn from the Russians, even fewer were willing to send their children to schools established by the Russian government to educate Muslim children. Borrowing from the Russian unbelievers in any way was considered *bid'at* (religiously forbidden innovation).

When Gasprinsky was young he could hardly have failed to have witnessed an outward manifestation of the Crimean Muslims' traditional religious identity. In 1874, fourteen years after Gasprinsky's birth, thousands of Crimean Tatars had demonstrated their religious devotion by emigrating from the Russian Empire to preserve their religious identity from the contamination of serving in the Tsar's Christian army. Any perceived threat to this religious foundation of the Crimean Muslims' identity was feared in the Crimea of Gasprinsky's youth. It can be argued that it was this religiously-based, defensive communal reaction to the Russian presence that had kept the Crimean Tatars from losing their customs and being assimilated by the Russians in the 19th century.[13]

There was, however, a negative side to this inward looking tradition of defensive Islam among the Crimean Tatars (and among all Muslims living under Russian rule) in the 19th century. The massive migrations to the Ottoman Empire, which brought this people's unique culture and identity close to extinction had, in part, been caused by the Crimean Muslims' traditional Islamic world view. To make matters worse, the conservative *mullahs*, the self-appointed

[13] Berthold Spuler, for example, argues that "There are grounds for accepting the theory that the religious cleavage was the only obstacle which prevented the complete disappearance of the Tatars as a nation through assimilation with the Russians." Bertold Spuler. *The Muslim World. A Historical Survey. Pt. II. The Mongol Period.* Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1969. p. 52.

guardians of the *ancien regime*, refused to countenance changes or improvements that might benefit the lot of those who remained in the Russian Empire if these innovations came from the *Urus Kafirs* (Russian infidels). In doing so, these gatekeepers of the Crimean Muslim morality stifled their people's educational development in particular.

A 19th century account of the Crimean Tatars' literature, for example, pointed out the Crimean Muslims' lack of acceptance of any book other that the *Qur'an*. This source stated "There is scarcely anything among them worthy of the name of literature. There is not one living Mohamedan author in the Krimea, and when I have mentioned this to the *effendis* (religious scholars) they give as their excuse that everything worthy of being written is contained in books already in their hand."[14]

The Crimean Muslims' *mekteb* and *medrese* educational system was extremely calcified and produced students who, after years of schooling, could recite the *Qur'an* and *Hadiths* in Arabic (without having actually learned Arabic!) but were capable of doing little else.[15] A Westerner who visited the Turkic peoples of the Russian Empire noticed the lack of national identity among these Muslims which resulted from this atrophied Islamic education and claimed "locked in on all sides by Russians, the Russian Turks are no longer a people; religion has, for them, necessarily stepped into the place of nationality."[16]

It should come as no surprise that a Crimean Tatar such as Gasprinsky, who had studied in a modern Russian *lycee*, lived in Paris and the reforming Ottoman Empire, and traveled in the literary circles of Russia, should be horrified by the state of affairs extant among his Turkic-Muslim kin in the Russian Empire. Having himself accessed Western civilization via a Russian education and the Russian language, (while carefully maintaining his Islamic-Tatar identity), it is also not surprising that Gasprinsky saw the introduction of modern culture as a panacea to cure the ills of Russian Muslim culture. Gasprinsky appears to have felt that, in the long run, allowing

[14] Robert Lyall. *Travels in Russia, the Krimea, the Caucasus and Georgia.* London; Routledge. 1812. p. 349.

[15] Hakan Kirimli. *National Identity and National Movements Among the Crimean Tatars.* Leiden; E. J. Brill. 1997. p. 26.

[16] Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu. *The Empire of the Tsars and Russians.* London; G. Putnam and Sons. 1893. p. 93.

the conservative *mullahs* to maintain a monopoly over the Russian Muslims' education would lead to a breakdown of their society. As the Russians continued to progress he felt the backward Tatars and other members of his imagined Turco-Islamic nation would be left even further behind on every level.[17]

This awareness put Gasprinsky in the unenviable position of confronting many of the Crimean Muslims' traditional ways of looking at the world. As the popularity of Gasprinsky's modernist schools spread after 1884 (based on the simple fact that his students learned how to read and write, whereas graduates from 8 years of study in a traditional *medrese* usually could not), he found himself perpetually battling with the conservative *mullahs* who considered his schools to be a heretical threat to the Crimean Muslim community's identity. One *mullah* who represented the *Kadimist* (traditionalists) viewpoint, went so far as to declare "whoever believes in God and Muhammed must be an enemy of the modernists. For them the *shar'iah* demands the death penalty."[18]

It was these critics of Gasprinsky who were to begin a campaign to paint him as a Russian agent bent on Russifying the Crimean Muslim people. Ironically enough, while he was feared by Islamic traditionalists on the one hand as a Russifier, many in Russian officialdom also considered Gasprinsky a threat because he might be one of those Muslims who would "strive to use all the advantages of Russian culture to defend their own nationality."[19] Russian officials, who worked closely with the traditional Muslim clergy appear to have had tremendous distrust of Gasprinsky and his reforms which they felt had the potential to threaten the status quo among the Empire's politically apathetic Muslim groups. Seen in this light, Gasprinsky's efforts to reform and modernize his own people through the vehicle of Russian culture hardly make him a "minstrel of Tsarism." Rather, Gasprinsky appears as a modernist who sought to preserve his people by utilizing that which was contained in the comparatively advanced culture of Russia which might benefit his own Turco-Muslim people.

[17] Alan Fisher. *The Crimean Tatars.* Stanford; Hoover Institution Press. 1978. p. 101.

[18] Edward Lazzerini. "Ismail Gasprinskii (Gaspirali): The Discourse of Modernism and the Russians." *The Crimean Tatars. Return to the Homeland.* ed. Edward Allworth. Durham; Duke University Press. 1998. p. 53.

[19] Edward Lazzerini. op. cit. no. 4. p. 31.

In spite of resistance from both the conservative clergy and the suspicious Russian authorities, scores of young Crimean Tatars enrolled in Gasprinsky's schools and a whole generation grew up on the eve of the Russian Revolution exposed to modern classroom subjects such as geography, history, science, literature etc. Education became so important to this new generation that the saying "To see a school is the joy of man" *(mektep kormek insana devlettir)* is still a popular Crimean Tatar proverb.

In the process of breaking out of their traditional confines through education, many young Crimean Tatars had, like their master, come to the conclusion that "The traditional means of societal self-preservation, i.e. mass emigration or desperate isolation in a shell of obscurantism, had actually accelerated the process of dissolution."[20] This realization was an important first step in breaking down defensive Islam as the defining marker of Crimean Tatar identity for this new generation that was to begin to see itself in modern, secularist terms.

Gasprinsky's Tercüman *as a Vehicle for Creating a 'Turkic Nation'*

Gasprinsky's ground breaking work in educational reform was matched only by his original work in publishing the Crimean Tatars' first newspaper, *Tercüman*. The impact of this innovative step for a people that had, in most cases, only been exposed to the *Qur'an* cannot be overestimated. The novelty of the idea of printing a publication for the Crimean Tatars can be seen in Gasprinsky's claim in 1888 that "even a short time ago there were very few Muslims who could tell you what a newspaper was, and if they were aware of the periodical press, the odds were that they would regard it as the work of the devil, to be avoided by all true believers."[21]

Crimean Muslim peasants who gathered before the village mosque to hear young students read aloud from the pages of *Tercüman* were, for the first time, exposed to events taking place beyond their immediate world. In the pages of *Tercüman* Gasprinsky wrote of technical inventions in the United States of America, wars in the Balkans, the modernization of Japan, reform in the Ottoman Empire,

[20] Hakan Kirimli. op. cit. no. 15. p. 37.
[21] Edward Lazzerini. cit. no. 4. p. 23.

the spread of European colonialism in Asia and Africa, the growing movement for women's rights in the West etc. While much of *Tercüman's* coverage was thus international, the majority of his paper's articles were actually devoted to Gasprinsky's own widely defined nation, the Turks of the Russian Empire.

Herein lies an important distinction between Gasprinsky and later Crimean Tatar nationalists. Gasprinsky believed that his nation was not restricted to the small community of approximately 200,000 Turkic Crimean Tatars living in the Crimea at the end of the 19th century, but the greater Turkic nation of millions.[22] Gasprinsky's program was in its nature Pan-Turkist and he aimed to unite the scattered Turkic-Muslim peoples of the Russian Empire through his paper. Gasprinsky was certainly inspired in this endeavor by Pan-Slavism and nation building in countries such as Germany or France that, over time, coalesced around a chosen central dialect and united to form a nation.

Gasprinsky actively promoted his motto "Unity in Language, Thought and Deed" *(Dilde, Fikirde ve Işte Birlik)* by means of a Turkic language that he created for his paper known as *Turki*. Gasprinsky's language, known in the Crimea as *Orta Türk Tili* (the Middle Turkish Language) was based on a simplified Oghuz Turkic dialect (basically Oghuz Ottoman without its complex Arabic, Persian and court Turkish grammar) with a large component of Kipchak Turkic vocabulary. This hybrid language, which combined the two great Turkic languages, was designed to unite the Kipchak speaking Nogais, Volga Tatars, Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, with the Oghuz speaking Turkmens, Azerbaijanis, Crimean Tats and Ottoman Turks.[23] Gasprinsky's ambitious objective was to unite "the boatman of the Bosphorus with the cameleer of Kashgar."[24] On a narrower basis, this language would also unite, for the first time, the Nogai-speaking Tatars of the Crimean steppe with the Oghuz-speaking Tat Tatars of the Crimea's southern coast.

It should be stated here that Gasprinsky's calls for linguistic and cultural unity among the Turkic peoples of the Russian Empire did

[22] V.D. Iaremchuk and V.B. Bezverkhii. "Tatari v Ukraini (Istoriko-Politologichii Aspekt)." *Ukrainskyi Istorychnyi Zhurnal*. vol. 5. 1994. p. 21.
[23] Yahya Abdoulline. "Histoire et Interpretations Contemporaines du Second Reformise Musulman (ou Djadisme) Chez les Tatars de la Volga et de Crimee." *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Sovietique*. vol. 27. (1-2). January-June. 1996. p. 79. n. 1.
[24] Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay. *La Presse et Le Mouvement National Chez les Musulmans de Russie Avant 1920*. Paris; Mouton. 1964. p. 41.

not have an overtly political tone. Had they done so there is little doubt that Gaspirali's newspaper, the longest running Muslim periodical in the Empire's history (1883-1918), would have been shut down by Russian censors. Even without this threat, however, it can hardly be doubted that Gasprinsky, who felt that the Empire's Muslims benefited from the modernizing influences of Russian rule, was adamantly opposed to confrontation with the Tsarist regime.

It is not surprising then that, by the 20th century, Gasprinsky had also come out against the rise of narrowly focused nationalist movements among the various Turkic peoples of the Empire. Gasprinsky felt that these narrowly-defined nationalist movements threatened the unity the greater Turkic nation. On many occasions Gasprinsky spoke out against the danger of 'narrow nationalism' and 'particularism' which he felt was unnecessarily antagonistic towards the Tsarist regime and detrimental to the Turkic nation's unity. In a typical comment Gasprinsky opined "Although the Turks who were subjects of Russia are called by the name 'Tatar', this is an error and an imputation...Those peoples who are called by the Russians as 'Tatar' and by the Bukharans as 'Nogay' are in reality, Turks."[25]

As the Russian Empire began to descend into chaos on the eve of the Russian Revolution, Gasprinsky's notion of a Turkic nation, however, began to appear utopian. The Kazakh shepherd on the Chinese border had very little in common with the Crimean Tatar farmer on the south Crimean shore and few but a dedicated coterie of Pan-Turkist intellectuals ever imagined themselves as belonging to a larger 'Turkic nation'. In addition, most Russian Turks would have had difficulty in imagining a Turkic homeland of such a large and amorphous nature and there was little territorial identification with a widely-defined Turkic homeland known as *Turan* or *Turkestan* among the Turkic masses of the late 19th century in Russia. As revolutionary movements for change swept through the Russian Empire after 1905, the idea of a broadly-defined, Turkic nation had little appeal to a new generation of Russian Muslims that saw their fate linked to their more immediate territories which would be constructed in the common imagination as national 'homelands'. In this respect, Gasprinsky can hardly be considered the 'founding father' of a narrowly-defined Tatar nation of the Crimea, he was on the contrary opposed to such a development.

[25] Hakan Kirimli. op. cit. no. 15. p. 41.

The importance of Gasprinsky's ideas in shaping later nationalist identity formation among the Crimean Tatars, and other Turkic subjects of the Tsar, should not however, be underestimated. While Gasprinsky's nation was Islamic (the Gagauz or Kryshans, non-Muslim Turkic ethnies in the Russian Empire, were not, for example, imagined as part of this nation) this community was, for the first time, to be based on Turkic ethnicity and language, not religion. With the gradual loss of Islam as the sole marker of group identity by the Turkic peoples of the Russian Empire (in part a direct result of Gasprinsky's challenge to the Islamic old order through his New Method schools and newspaper), it was language and ethnicity that came to play the defining role as markers of group identity for Russian Muslims. By 1917 the Tsar's Muslim subjects (especially the elite) increasingly began to define themselves as ethnic Azerbaijanis, Kazakhs, Volga Tatars, Crimean Tatars etc. first, and Muslims secondly.

In the narrower Crimean context, Gasprinsky's newspaper (which is described by Lazzerini as a "revolution in communication") played the important role that Karl Deutch ascribes to print press in his classic work *Nationalism and Social Communication*. Namely, it enabled members of the Crimean Tatar ethnic group to identify with other members of their community they would never meet (i.e. the nation) and to see themselves in relation to other groups on the basis of ethnicity.[26] Gasprinsky's reforms also had the effect of de-legitimizing the old order which was based on conservative Islam, as can be seen from this report from the Russian police chief of Bahçesaray in the early 20th century:

> Over the previous period, the police-meister was persuaded that an essential, radical change in the customs and communal way of life of the inhabitants of Bahçesaray had taken place. The influence of the clergy had gradually weakened. The youth were already critical of the old customs, *mullahs* attended theater performances, they took photographs, they were able to sit at one table with the Christians when they would not have done so earlier. They even sought to send their children after the *mekteb* to Russo-Turkish schools...The customs of

[26] Lazzerini, Edward. "Ismail Bey Gasprinskii's Perevodchik/Tercüman: A Clarion of Modernism." *Central Asian Monuments*. ed. Hasan Paksoy. Istanbul; Isis Press. 1992. p. 154. *Karl Deutsch. Nationalism and Social Communication*. Boston; MIT Press. 1962. pp. 86-105.

the city-dwellers had changed so much that, in the coffee houses, they began to read Russian newspapers in order to attract customers.[27]

Gasprinsky and the Issue of Migration to the Ottoman Empire

In addition to his work establishing ethnicity, as opposed to religion, as the primary marker of group identity for the Crimean Tatars and other Russian Muslims, Gasprinsky also contributed to the forging of the Crimean Tatar nation by working tirelessly to halt the migration of Crimean Tatars to the Ottoman Empire.[28] Gasprinsky saw these harmful migrations as being the direct result of the very Islamic backwardness he was laboring to overcome and spoke out against them on many occasions. As early as 1883 Gasprinsky began his attacks on the migration of "the local Tatars" to the Ottoman Empire writing "having learned of the imposition of war duty, they are selling their movable and immovable property and migrating to Turkey. There is harm in this, since people frequently forget that there is no land where they can live with only happiness. The Crimean Muslims in general would not leave for Turkey if they were able to foresee their sad fate in this alien land."[29]

Gasprinsky blamed these migrations, in part, on the policies of the Tsarist government in the Crimea and claimed that "the government, and behind it the local authorities, did not have a clear, defined position on the emigration of the Crimean Tatars, therefore, this emigration was at one moment encouraged as desirable, then held back as a harmful one."[30] In an article entitled "Permanent Emigration" Ismail Gasprinski roughly guessed that somewhere between 1,000,000 and 1,200,000 Crimean Tatars had left the Crimea between its annexation and the year 1902, and this was seen

[27] V. Iu. Gankevich. *Ocherk Istorii Krymskotatarskogo Narodnogo Obrazovaniia.* Simferopol; Tavria. 1997. p. 115.

[28] Lazzerini writes "when asked why he did not emigrate to Turkey as other Russian Muslims had, Gasprinskii made it clear that it was worthwhile to remain in the Empire to work for change. Not surprisingly, his position on Crimean Tatar emigration throughout the nineteenth century reflected the same attitude." Edward Lazzerini. op. cit. no. 4. p. 146.

[29] Iu. Kandymov. *Ismail bei Gasprinskii (Gaspirali). Iz Naslediia.* Simferopol; 'Tavria'. 1991. p. 12.

[30] Ismail Gasprinky. *Rossia i Vostok. (Russkoe Musulmanstvo i Russko-Vostochnoe Soglashenie).* Kazan; Fond Zhien. 1993. pp. 28-29.

as an irreparable loss to the entire Turkic people of Russia.[31]

When a new move towards migration to the Ottoman Empire broke out among the Tatars in the Crimea in 1902, Gasprinsky began a regular series of articles entitled "On Migration" in which he fought to prevent the departure of his Turkic countrymen to the lands of the sultan. In issue after issue Gasprinsky gently spoke out against migration, and repeatedly informed his simple audience of the pitfalls associated with migration to the Ottoman Empire. In a typical article from this period Gasprinsky wrote:

> Last year in a series of articles we proved to our countrymen all the absurdity and disastrous nature of emigration to Turkey...The results of this rashness are now becoming visible to all. Hundreds have written reporting the deaths of whole families and massive illness among emigrants. As the living witnesses to the calamities, those having the possibility to return to the Crimea arrive with every steamship, having grown older over the year and, of course, having been ruined. The victims of the emigration mania are so eloquent that seeing and listening to them is heartbreaking. There is a hope that the emigration, which is already calming down, will die permanently. Thank God since there were no causes for emigration and there still are none. It is necessary to simply sit down and engage in work with zeal.[32]

In another article from May of 1902 in the series "On Emigration" Gaspirali appears to show exasperation towards the decision of Crimean Tatars to abandon their homeland for the Ottoman Empire:

> We have heard rumors that in one or another Tatar village people are selling their land and cattle, having in mind resettlement in Turkey. If this is true, then we must pity these people for they know not what they do. To leave one's homeland one must have some sort of reason, to go to a new place one must have true, exact knowledge of that place, otherwise it will not be resettlement but senseless wandering. Any senseless, unfounded move will lead to poverty, destruction and ruin.
>
> We do not at this time wish to go into the living and working conditions of our people in Turkey, but wish to caution those inclined to wander to do the following; do not sell anything, do not undertake anything until it is positively known that the government will allow resettlement; a passport to travel abroad costs 10-15 rubles and therefore it does not make much sense to waste such a huge sum...You will just be throwing your money away.

[31] This was of course a greatly inflated number. Edige Kirimal. "The Crimean Tatars." *Studies on the Soviet Union.* (new series). vol. X. no. 1, 1970. pp. 70-97.

[32] Ismail Gasprinsky. *Tercüman.* Sept. 15, 1903. no. 36.p. 155.

> Those who exhaust their means will live in poverty there and then live in poverty here, as often happens when they return to the Crimea. Everyone should think twice before selling everything and setting off on an unknown journey with children and elderly. There is no land of milk and honey over there. Anywhere and everywhere one must work diligently, skillfully and untiringly for his daily bread. The rules of life are the same in the Crimea as they are in Turkey and in Japan.[33]

To those who were tempted to disregard his advice, Gasprinsky offered the following cautionary tale:

> Here is an evident fact: not long ago the relative of the famous master Selim Usta, Maksumadzhi Khalil, left from Bahçesaray. He (Selim Usta) received a tearful letter which he conveyed to the editor. The emigrant complains that no one remained in Constantinople, and that they were transported to the Asiatic side (of the Bosphorus). Here they left them without any assistance, letting each get settled as he was able and capable. As to requests for allotting land, the local authorities require an acceptance certificate for resettlement. Those who do not possess such a certificate are coldly asked—"Were you really driven from Russia or is perhaps someone calling you here?"
>
> The fore mentioned Khalil states further that emigrants on the steppe set up tents from torn felt, clothing and other trash. Thank Allah, that the warm spring sun allows such an existence, otherwise death would arrive soon. [34]

In a 1902 article entitled "Friendly Advice" Gasprinsky uses a traditional Crimean Tatar narrative technique and creates a hypothetical discussion with an "Ali-Jaffer" in an appeal to his audience to think carefully when considering their decision to emigrate:

> My dear friend Ali-Jaffer, you have decided to resettle in Turkey. You have decided this is what you want to do; and God be with you! May God grant you everything good. But permit me to be to you a sincere friend who frequently prays for your well being and weeps over your fate—since you are a good, simple man take this brotherly advice.
>
> Dear Ali-Jaffer, you may depart now, you may leave in spring or next year—you are allowed to go; nobody will detain you—but do not hurry in this fashion, Allah does not love haste. At present it is winter, and cold; the earth is covered with snow and here you are preparing to go somewhere. Everything living is in its burrow; all things living are hiding from the frigidity and cold. Who is driving you my dear, that you throw yourself with your family and baby in this cold

[33] Ismail Gasprinsky. *Tercüman.* "Ob Emigratsiia." May 7, 1902. no. 17. p. 3.
[34] Ismail Gasprinsky. *Tercüman.* "Pis'mo Emigranta." March 14, 1903. no. 10 p. 37.

> time on a journey across the stormy sea? Why my dear, do you subject the children of your blood to the misery of a winter voyage? Consider, will it not be a sin to subject them to such suffering. After winter comes spring; after the cold comes warmth. Once you have decided to abandon the blessed Crimea, would it not be better to prepare to travel in the spring, when it will be warm, and then proceed on the road you will travel? Surely now, you will not see the land on which you dwell for it is covered with snow.
>
> Courageous Ali-Jaffer, remember your distant ancestors were brave knights, the praise of whom resounded half way around the world, your close fathers were universally known as honest, kind, patient people, worthy of a better fate and greater fortune. Do not throw your little ones into the embraces of the cold, or even perhaps starvation. It is true that God will provide for everything, but remember the children and the family, He has entrusted them to us.[35]

While the causes for the migration movement of 1902 may have had to do with the Crimean Tatars' perennial difficulties in Russia (the land issue in particular) one source points out that there was also calls for *hijra* at this time from religious figures in the Crimea. A Sheikh Haci Bekir Effendi from the Bahçesaray district had in fact declared that "*hijra* was required of true Muslims" *(hicret vacip oldu)* and that "Muslims could no longer remain here now."[36]

One of Gasprinsky's cohorts, who was to become a leading Crimean Tatar nationalist, Seyit Abdullah Özenbaşli, attacked this movement for *hijra* with a new language that sounds increasingly nationalistic in a late 1902 article. In the writings of Özenbaşli, the Tatars' traditional impulse to emigration was to be confronted for the first time by a proponent of a new world view which saw the abandonment of a people's Fatherland as anathema. Özenbaşli's tone is also much harsher than Gasprinsky's fatherly coaxing and his article implies that abandonment of the Crimea is a betrayal of the nation*(millet)* and countrymen *(ihvan)*. In essence, Özenbaşli's article is a nationalist attack on an aspect of the Crimean Tatars' prenationalist, religious identity, *hijra*, that had long been institutionalized in Crimean Muslim society. In an article entitled "My Dear" *(Ey Gönul)* Özenbaşli wrote:

[35] Ismail Gasprinsky. *Tercüman.* Nov. 11 1902. no. 43. p. 65.
[36] Ahmet Özenbaşli. "Çarlik Hakimiyetinde Kirim Faciasi." *Emel.* 110. 1979. p. 33. This sort of call was not unique even at this late date. As late as 1907 an Ottoman Turk, M. Sai Halim Pasha was to declare "The Fatherland of the Muslim is the place where the Sheriat prevails." Bernard Lewis. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey.* London; Oxford University Press. 1961. p. 317.

Oh shame! You are not ashamed and search yourself for an excuse.
Why is it necessary for the Tatar people to partake in *hijra?*
My dear, why are you fleeing to strange lands?
What you are doing is not courageous!

Why do you flee from your people?
Do you expect to meet *Hizri* (a saint of protection) on the road?
You are begging and this leaves shame on your face,
What you are doing is without merit!

Are the people you leave behind here lacking somehow?
Hey hopeless one have you been cut off from strength!
Why are you silent, has your tongue been cut off?
These actions are opposed to religious creed![37]

Gasprinsky's campaign against emigration, and Özenbaşli's increasing calls for Crimean Tatars to remain in their homeland, marked a watershed in Crimean Tatar history. From this time forward, members of the Crimean Tatar intelligentsia with an increasingly nationalistic outlook fought against the abandonment of the Crimean homeland. Gasprinsky's simple words "To leave one's homeland one must have some sort of reason" appear to have had resonance with his audience who began to think of the Crimea, and not the Ottoman Empire, as their people's true homeland. Migration to Turkey increasingly came to be seen as a betrayal of the homeland (although Gasprinsky certainly had a larger vision of this homeland) and a betrayal of the Crimean Tatar people. The efforts by Gasprinsky, Özenbaşli and others appear to have had an effect and the migration of 1902 never assumed the numbers of earlier migrations (it was limited to two or three thousand people at most). Although several thousand Crimean Tatars did migrate to the Ottoman Empire to avoid military duty during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, the majority of these returned to their Crimean homeland at the end of this conflict.

The more limited migrations of the 20th century had a completely different nature to those of the previous century. The modern migrations were stimulated more by family interests, individual decisions to look for work in Turkey, or to avoid collectivization and famine in the early Soviet era. The idea of migration as an unpatriotic abandonment of the homeland clearly marked a fundamental change in Crimean Tatars' perceptions of themselves and their links to their natal territory. The traditional notion of *hijra* to the *ak toprak* of the

[37] Özenbaşli. Ibid.

Ottoman Empire had, by the beginning of the Soviet era, lost its influence on a people that increasingly began to view their land as an *ata toprak* (fatherland). While Crimean Tatar students continued to travel to Istanbul to receive educations, they increasingly returned to the home to use their training to modernize, educate and improve their own society in the Crimea. That there was no great out migration from the Crimea to the Dobruca or Anatolia during the turmoil of the Russian Revolution or World War I (during which Crimean Tatars were drafted into the Russian army, a traditional catalyst for emigration) may, in part, be explained by the fact that many segments among the Crimean Tatar people had, by this time, begun to see the Crimea as their homeland.

The Role of the Young Tatars in Defining the Crimean Homeland

By 1905 revolutionary movements had begun to spread throughout the Tsarist Empire and this mood also manifested itself among a new generation of Crimean Tatars who were not content with the innocuous cultural reform movement of Gasprinsky. As calls for political involvement in defense of Crimean Tatar issues became widespread in the Crimea, the era of the gentlemen reformer ended and a more overtly political movement began among the Crimean Tatars. The focus of Crimean Tatar activity switched at this time to the second most important Crimean Tatar enclave in the Crimea, Karasu Bazar.

Karasu Bazar, like Bahçesaray, was a mixture of the old Tatar and the new Russian. This town is overlooked by the Shirinsky Cliffs (also known as *Ak Kaya*, 'White Rock' in Tatar), the sacred site of *kurultay* clan gatherings of the Shirin and other powerful *bey* families during the khanate period. Several mosques (including the ancient Sher Dor mosque) were also located in this former seat of the Shirin *beylik* and to this day the winding cobblestone streets, with their faceless white washed houses, have a Tatar air to them. By the early 20th century paved roads and electricity had made their way to Karasu Bazar and Russians, Germans, Bulgarians and Armenians had begun to settle in the vicinity.

Perhaps the most noticeable sign of modernization in Karasu Bazar, however, was its reformist Tatar mayor from 1907-12, Abdureshid Mehdi. Mehdi originally heralded from the Crimean steppe (the village of Karanki in the Perekop region) and was thus familiar

with terrible plight of the Muslim peasants of the Crimea.[38] After having been elected to the mayorship of Karasu Bazar, Mehdi launched a campaign with the unabashed goal of winning back land for the landless Crimean Tatar peasants.

While Gasprinsky had been circumspect in his dealings with the Russian government, Mehdi and his cohorts (many of whom were Nogai Tatars from the northern Crimea) did not hide their nationalist tendencies. Mehdi espoused his ideas in a newspaper of his own known as *Vatan Hadimi* (The Servant of the Nation) and, among his favorite subjects in this venue, was the question of land reform. That land reform was needed in the Crimea was beyond a doubt. A mere 1,000 *pomeshchiks* owned more than one half of all land in the Crimea by the year 1877, while most Crimean Tatars had small sustenance plots at best.[39] In some districts of the Crimea 40%-50% of the Crimean Tatars were landless and, by the 20th century, destitute Crimean Tatar field hands roamed the countryside working others' lands to earn enough money to buy a house, afford *kalem* (bride's price) or simply to survive. As Mehdi eloquently described the situation "Among our people it is estimated that there are 50,000 landless individuals who have to look for jobs, live as hired farm laborers, and work for the *pomeshchiks*. On the other hand, here, there are *vakıf* lands, confiscated lands, state lands, allocated lands and *pomeshchik* lands which can save many people from misery."[40] After having been elected to the second *Duma* (parliament) in 1906, something unheard for a Tatar peasant, Mehdi began a campaign to regain the Crimean lands lost to his Tatar countrymen over the previous century.

In Mehdi's speeches we hear, for the first, time language that defines the Crimea not as a province of the Russian Empire, segment of the *Dar al-Islam* or adjunct of a larger Turkic homeland, but as the national patrimony of the Crimean Tatar nation. In a speech given in 1910, for example, Mehdi uses allegories of blood mixed with soil that evoke the language of classic German nationalism. As Mehdi put it "In our ignorance, committing mistake after mistake, we gave away our valuable lands—every handful of which is stained with the blood of our ancestors—to the hands of the enemy, while

[38] Alexandre Bennigsen. op. cit. no. 24. p. 140.
[39] Richard Pipes. *The Formation of the Soviet Union*. Cambridge Mass; Harvard University Press. 1954. p. 189.
[40] Hakan Kirimli. op. cit. no. 15. p. 93.

we ourselves live separated from it in misery and poverty. All who think about this sorrowful, abject position involuntarily shed tears."[41] In another speech Mehdi went so far as to make a bold call for return of the vast *vakıf* estates confiscated from his people by the Russian government and *pomeshchiks*:

> We have already written that, at the time of the Crimea's subjugation by Russia 125 years ago there had been some 300,000 des. (desiatins) of *vakıf* lands. And now at the hands of the Spiritual Board and the *Vakıf* Commission only 87,000 des. of *vakıf* lands have been left. That is to say, 200,000 des. lands were usurped by several persons, and most of them seized by the state, which has been most artful in such matters, and these sacred lands, left us by our ancestors, were renamed state lands. It is our most important duty to work for the return of these lands which are the inalienable property of the Crimean Muslims.[42]

In one of Mehdi's many impassioned speeches (which won him the respect of a fellow revolutionary, Vladimir Lenin, who praised Mehdi for his "fiery revolutionary speeches") he poignantly spoke of the Crimean Tatars' position at the time of the post-Crimean War great migrations to the Ottoman Empire.[43] Mehdi eloquently stated "fifty years ago, just after the Crimean Campaign, our Crimean Tatars faced such an economic collapse that they could hardly stand the imposts. Fifty years have passed and the Tatars are still in the same position, and they have begun to degenerate and become extinct. But we do not want to die out, we want a new life."[44]

Although Mehdi was ultimately unsuccessful in his efforts to see land redistributed in the Crimea, he and the loosely organized young Tatar nationalists of the Crimea, informally known as the Young Tatars *(Genç Tatarları)*, laid the foundation for the spread of nationalist identity among the common Crimean Muslim peasantry. Just as young Russian revolutionaries were 'going to the people' at this time with the aim of spreading their revolutionary ideas to the common peasants, Mehdi and his followers brought their message of the Crimean Tatars' unique claim to the lands of their ancestors to the villages of the Crimea. Mehdi's calls for the distribution of land had

[41] E. Seitbekirov. "Sviashchennaia Bor'ba Krymskikh Tatar." *Golos Kryma*. Nov. 14. 1997. p. 5.
[42] Hakan Kirimli. op. cit. no. 15. p. 88.
[43] V.E. Vozgrin. *Istoricheskie Sud'by Krymskikh Tatar*. Moscow; Misl'. 1992. p. 365.
[44] Ibid. p. 109.

particular resonance among the destitute Tatar villagers who began to see that these nationalist figures (who were once dismissed by the stoic Tatar peasants as 'hot heads') were willing to do more to improve their plight than their own obsequious village *mullahs*.

The Crimean police were aware of this activity and on several occasions sent exaggerated reports to St. Petersburg describing the activities of the growing number of 'Muslim agitators' in the Crimea. One police report from the era made the preposterous accusation that the Young Tatars sought to resurrect the Crimean Khanate as a vassal of Turkey! According to this report:

> The teachers in the Simferopol *'Ruşte'* (higher school) in addition to the reading of their subjects secretly initiate the students of the upper classes into the history of Turkey and the former Crimean Khanate and agitate among them on the necessity for the Crimean Tatars to resurrect the former khanate which should be placed under the authority of the Turkish sultan since the latter was the caliph and the sole actual protector of the world's Muslims.[45]

Reports of this nature show that the Russian authorities in the Crimea misunderstood the program of the Young Tatars which, by its very nature, was revolutionary and anti-monarchist (i.e. against the absolutist authority of 'anachronistic' monarchs, be it the Tsar, Khan or the Sultan-Caliph). Mehdi's program was based on the formative principles of populism and nationalism not nostalgia for the lost dynasty of the Girays.

While the simple Crimean Muslim villagers may not have understood the language of Mehdi's early form of nationalism they certainly understood the value of land. One method that Mehdi and the Young Tatars utilized for instilling an attachment to the Crimean homeland among the common Crimean Muslim peasantry was to use *hadiths* of the Prophet (most of which were of dubious authenticity) to stress the Islamic basis for national patriotism. Hakan Yavuz has pointed out the use of one *hadith* in particular which connected the sayings of the Prophet with attachment to one's homeland. According to Yavuz "The formation of political consciousness among Russian Muslims led to a re-examination of territory within Islamic teaching as the Muslim reformists in Russia tried to give political meaning to territory by utilizing an invented new *Hadis (Hadith)* that

[45] A. K. Bochagov. *Milli Firka. Natsional'naia Kontrrevoliutiia v Krymy*. Simferopol; Krymskoe Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo. 1930. p. 27.

culminated in (the saying) 'the love of the fatherland is the love of the faith'."[46]

As popular Young Tatar teachers began to replace conservative *mullahs* in mosques and *medreses* throughout the Crimea and to become elected to local positions, the Islamic clergy began to lose its hold over the hearts and minds of the Crimean Tatar peasantry. The Young Tatars also became increasingly bold in their nationalist orientation. By 1913 a Young Tatar, Shamil Toktargazı, was to write a poem entitled "On the Eulogy of the Crimea" which was daringly nationalist in its content:

> 'Love of the Fatherland is part of the Faith' is *hadith*,
> Only a scoundrel would not love his Fatherland.
> Only the son of a Tatar is the inheritor of this Land,
> The Others cannot claim the Crimea.
>
> There is no Land like the Crimea in the world,
> There is no glory like Tatarness in the world.[47]

While Mehdi and the Young Tatars directed the majority of their efforts against the *Kadimist* (conservative clergy), they also appear to have split with Gasprinsky who was seen as too servile, apolitical and unconcerned with pressing issues in the Crimea by this new generation of political activists. The great (but controversial) Crimean Tatar writer Shamil Aliadin wrote of Mehdi "This man was a completely different kind of man from Gasprinsky...Gasprinsky began his activities in the last century. Mehdi—in ours. Our time is completely different. And Mehdi and his ideas were different."[48]

[46] Hakkan Yavuz. "The Patterns of Political Islamic Identity: Dynamics of National and Transnational Loyalties and Identities." *Central Asian Survey* (1995), 14 (3). p. 352.

[47] Ibid. p. 97. It was at this time that the Young Turks began to construct Ottoman Anatolia as a Turkish homeland. Writing in 1900, for example, Memhmed Emin wrote:

> A man is the slave of his fatherland...
> These lands are the home of my fathers,
> This is the homeland, this is the arm of God,
> A son will never destroy the home of his fathers.

Mehmed Emin. "Anadoludan bir Ses yahut Cenge Giderken." *Türkce Şiirler*. Istanbul; 1900. p. 37. Prior to this the Young Ottoman writer, Namik Kemal, had begun to popularize the dictum attributed to the Prophet *Hubb al-Watan, min al-Iman* (Love of the Homeland is Love of the Faith).

[48] Shamil Aliadin. *Teselli*. Moscow; Sovetskii Pisatel' 1985. p. 307. Aliadin's legacy is tainted by charges of collaboration with the Soviet regime during the exile

By the second decade of the 20th century even some of Gasprinsky's followers from *Tercüman* had come to see their nation in narrow terms and their homeland as the Crimea. As the Russian Empire tottered on the eve of World War I, the victory of Tatarness *(Tatarlık)* over a wider sense of Turkicness *(Türklük)* had been assured among the Crimean Tatar intelligentsia. In the process it was the Crimean Peninsula that was defined as the Crimean Tatars' sacred homeland.

Kirimli sums up the importance of the Young Tatars in constructing the Crimea as a homeland stating:

> It was the Young Tatars who manifestly introduced the territorially-bound and-defined Crimean Tatar national concept. For them the Crimea was the Fatherland of the Crimean Tatars who had an inalienable historical rights upon it. The expropriation of the Crimean Tatar peasants was unacceptable not only because this was socially evil, but also because it represented an alien infringement upon the Crimean Tatar historical legacy and property.[49]

The Rise of the Vatan Society

As mentioned previously, the territorialization/nationalization of Crimean Tatar identity did not occur in a vacuum. To a certain extent the rise of Crimean Tatar nationalism occurred as a reaction to the rise of national awareness among the Crimean Tatars' two most influential neighbors, the Turks and the Russians. A mass-based nationalism began to spread in Russia after the 1861 liberation of the serfs which replaced the previous loyalty to Orthodoxy and the Tsar. Similarly, in the Ottoman Empire the term 'Turk' ceased to be a term of opprobrium applied to country peasants and became proudly worn by the Young Turks who stressed their patriotic loyalty to an ethnically-defined Turkish homeland. With the overthrow of Sultan Abdül Hamid in 1908/9 by the Committee for Union and Progress, it was the Young Turks in particular who were to serve as a model for Crimean Tatar nationalists who sought to overthrow the old order in their own homeland.

years. Aliadin came out against dissidents such as Dzhemilev in the 1970s but was widely acknowledged by his nation at his funeral in the Crimea soon after his people's repatriation in 1990.

[49] Hakan Kirimli. op. cit. no. 15. p. 103.

For a young generation of Crimean Tatar students studying in Istanbul, the first two decades of the 20th century were a heady period. Old conventions were being broken down and writers, such as Yusuf Akchura and Namik Kemal before him, had begun forging a Turkish national identity for a Muslim people that had previously, like the Russians, subsumed themselves in a religiously-defined empire.

The Turkish writer Namik Kemal's seminal work *Vatan yahut Silistre* (Homeland or Silistre) dealing with the Crimean War, in particular, made an impression on the Crimean Tatar students of Istanbul. The Crimean Tatars in Istanbul were also impressed by the clandestine Young Turk movement in Turkey and, in 1909, a group of these students organized an underground political organization of their own known as the *Vatan Cemiyeti* (Fatherland Society).

Founded by two Crimean Tatar students in their early twenties, Cafer Seydahmet (who often added the last name Kirimer to his name) and Numan Çelebi Cihan, the *Vatan Cemiyeti* had as its stated goal "the liberation of our nation."[50] The formation of this clandestine organization represents a new era in the development of Crimean Tatar national identity. For the first time in over a century, Crimean Tatars were organizing themselves on a political basis with the aim of liberating the Crimean homeland. The members of the Fatherland Society were proposing nothing less than independent Crimean Tatar statehood in their Crimean homeland.

The members of the Fatherland Society began working towards this objective on several fronts. Five man secret cells were organized among trustworthy members of the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Istanbul and these in turn organized cells in the villages of the Crimea starting in the year 1912. Edige Kirimal states that, by 1917, nationalist cells could be found in almost every village and town in the Crimea.[51] From all accounts it appears that Tatars from the Turkish diaspora (many of whom were Ottoman citizens) who had returned to the Crimea played a key role in the development of a national movement in the Crimea at this time.

The first step in the development of a revolutionary program by the Fatherland Society consisted of printing proclamations calling for the distribution of lost *vakıf* lands, an end to the oppression of

[50] Ibid. p. 170.

[51] Edige Kirimal. "The Crimean Tatars." *Studies on the Soviet Union.* vol. 10. no. 1. 1970. p. 78.

Russian officials *(chinovniks)*, an end to the dominance of the obsequious Islamic clergy class in the Crimea and political freedom. These proclamations and hundreds of books dealing with revolutionary concepts were smuggled from Turkey to the Crimea and distributed to teachers in the New Method schools (most of whom were Tatars from the Turkish diaspora) throughout the Crimea. In scores of classrooms throughout the Crimean countryside Crimean Tatar students began to take heed of the revolutionary words "For the rise of our Fatherland and Nation we have to sacrifice our lives and spill blood."[52] This stated willingness to spill blood in the defense of the Crimean Tatars' claim to the Crimea as a homeland shows that the concept of nation and homeland had progressed even further than that program initiated by Mehdi (who died in 1912) and the loosely organized Young Tatars of the previous decade.

The struggle to nationalize the masses was, however, by no means to be an easy one. As shall be seen, the bulk of the Crimean Tatar population on the eve of the Russian Revolution was still dominated by village *mullahs*. An equal barrier to the Tatar nationalists' goal of forging a unified Tatar nation in the Crimean Peninsula was the oft overlooked historic differences between the Tats of the southern Crimea and the Nogais of the north.

Localized Sub-Ethnic Identities and the Forging of a Crimean Tatar Nation

Perhaps one of the least explored aspects of Crimean Tatar nation construction in the early 20th century was the continuing importance of the parochial identifications with micro-regions within the Crimea by the heterogeneous Crimean Tatar population.[53] All too often the Crimean Tatars are treated as a homogenous ethnic group and regional identities based on geography, language and differing origins tend to be glossed over.

[52] Hakan Kirimli. op. cit. no. 15. p. 173.

[53] While scholars studying the rise of national identity among the Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmens, Chechens and other Muslim ethnic groups in the Russian-Soviet Empire, for example, have recognized the saliency of distinctions between settled Uzbeks *(Sarts)* and nomadic Uzbeks; the lack of unity among the three great Kazakh hordes; and the history of warfare between Salors, Tekkes and other Turkmen tribes who would eventually formed the Turkmen nation; the importance of regional clans *(teyips)* in preventing Chechen unification etc... few have recognized the important, sub-ethnic divisions among the Crimean Tatars.

It should, however, be recognized that those Crimean Tatar nationalists who sought to forge a unified Crimean Tatar nation on the eve of the Russian revolution were faced with the task of unifying a people that, in addition to their conservative Islamic identity, still tended to identify themselves with their region or sub-ethnic affiliation as Tats or Nogais. In his history of the formation of the Crimean Tatar people, Memet Sevdiyar writes "In the Crimea prior to the total deportation of the Crimean Tatar people, there were 22 dialects in this single Turkic language and, in addition to these dialects, they differed from one another in their physiognomy, color and also in their clothing. This was the result of the fact that the Crimean Tatars formed as a result of the mixing of different tribes."[54] The dialects of Crimean Tatars varied from village to village as late as the 20th century. While in the Crimea, the author was told by older Crimean Tatars, who had lived in the Crimea prior to the deportation, that one could tell which village a Crimean Tatar heralded from by his or her distinct dialect and accent.[55]

On some occasions it was more than a mere dialect that differentiated the villagers of the Crimea. Tat Oghuz-Tatar speakers of the southern coast, for example, often had difficulties in understanding the Nogai Kipchak-Tatar from the other side of the Yaila mountain range. In addition, the sub-ethnies that were to form the Crimean Tatar nation were differentiated in their physiognomy.

On a linguistic basis, Crimean Tatars from the Yalta vicinity spoke an Oghuz version of Crimean Tatar that was considered more 'cultured' than the hybrid Kipchak-Oghuz Tatar of the central Bahçesaray region or the 'unrefined' Kipchak Tatar of the Nogai population of the steppes. These differences were so pronounced (even as late as the Soviet period) that several elderly Crimean Tatars I interviewed mentioned the fact that girls from the coast, who were still known as Yaliboyu Tats, were often forbidden from marrying Nogais from the interior as late as the 1930s.

The renowned Soviet era Crimean Tatar writer, Shamil Aliadin, mentioned these parochial differences in the Crimea of the early 20th century in his work entitled *Teselli* (Consolation). According to this author:

[54] Memet Sevdiayar. *Etiudy ob Etnogeneze Krymskikh Tatar*. New York; Fond Krym. 1997. p. 539.

[55] A. N. Kononov. *Istoriia Izucheniia Tiurkskikh Iazikov v Rossi*. Leningrad; Nauka. 1982. pp. 248-249.

> The inhabitants of the Crimea are distinguished by one characteristic. A person born, for example, in Simeiz (the south-western tip of the Crimea) or Yalta, is called a south-coaster. Someone born in Karangit is not linked to those on the south coast. This is in spite of the fact that Simeiz and Karangit stand on the same sea...As to Kok Koz (the Crimean interior), where is it in relation to the sea? In Kok Koz even if one ascends the minaret you cannot see the sea...For this reason the inhabitants of the southern coast are called haughty and arrogant since they emphasize the fact that they were born on the sea, as if they arose from the sea and have special privileges.[56]

These differences extended from language and physiognomy to agricultural customs. In another passage in his work, Aliadin speaks of the differences between the Nogai Tatars of the steppe and the Tat Tatars and has a Nogai tell a Tat "The Tats own wide vineyards and splendid gardens. Probably there are nowhere else such fruits and apples as those they gather. But us Nogais, we have wheat! And meat!"[57] While preventing unity on some levels, these sub-ethnic differences and stereotypes do not, however, appear to have been overtly antagonistic.[58] During World War I a group of Crimean Tatar prisoners of war in Hungary, for example, sang of the beauty of Tat girls. The following is a stanza from one such song:

> Ah my dear Tat girl
> With cheeks of red
> I gave you an apple but you did not take it
> I gave you a shepherd's pipe but you did not play it.[59]

Historians agree that these differences were certainly a major inhibitor to national unification by the Crimean Tatars. Vozgrin speaks of the Crimean Tatars' lack of national unity during the 19th century and concludes:

> The reasons for this are numerous and all lie on the surface. Firstly the ancient narrowness and isolation of the predominately village population. Moreover, this applied not only to the wider world, but

[56] Aliadin. op. cit. no. 48. p. 276.
[57] Ibid. p. 263.
[58] In his work A. Memetov claims that "The Tatars have preserved proverbs which characterize the Tats as obstinate, unaccomodating people" and there appears to have been sub-ethnic stereotypes and cleavages among the Crimean Tatars well into the mid 20th century. A. Memetov. *Krymskie Tatary. Istoriko-Lingvisticheskii Ocherk.* Simferopol; Anaiurt. 1993. p. 20.
[59] Zsuzsa Kakuk. *Kirim Tatar Şarkiliari.* Ankara; Turk Dil Kurumu Yayinlari. 1993. p. 37.

> between the mountains and foothills, the foothills and the steppe. The isolation was between one another and separate villages. Hardly a nation, with distinct dialects, differing one from another even from the anthropological perspective, the Tatars were not able and did not want to unify in the face of mutual oppression.[60]

In his work A.I. Kliachin states "It should be stated that in the 1920s a unified Crimean Tatar ethnos had not been completely formed. Far from being a homogenous nation, the Tatars were divided into three ethnographic groups, they were delineated by their language, culture, and anthropological characteristics into the south coast Tatar, the *Yaliboyu*, the mountain Tatars, the *Tats* or *Tatlars*, and of course the steppe Tatars, the *Nogais*."[61]

That the Crimean Tatars sustained their parochial identifications with their micro-homelands and sub-ethnic groupings into the 20th century should not come as a surprise to those acquainted with the geographically and ethnically diverse history of the peninsula outlined in chapter one. As late as the Russian Revolution the Crimean Tatar villages of Yaila mountains remained isolated from one another for the Russian government had little incentive to build roads into this area. While the Tatar villages of the coast had been connected by a coastal road in the 19th century, there was little movement between those living in villages built on the coastal mountains and those Tats of the interior mountains or Nogais of the plain.

Although the Volga Tatars were known for their traveling merchants and traders (Volga Tatar merchants could be found throughout Central Asia in the 19th century), the Crimean Tatars were by contrast not a geographically mobile people with a well developed bourgeoisie. While many members of the *mirza* landowning elite sent their children to Istanbul for education, most Crimean Tatar peasants had never traveled far from their *küçük vatan* (their 'little homeland' i.e. their immediate district). In his 19th century description of the Baidar Valley in the south-western Crimea, Baron von Campenhausen, for example, wrote "Its inhabitants lead a happy pastoral life, and they are so indifferent with respect to the rest of the world, that many of them have never *passed* the mountains by which their native vale is surrounded."[62]

[60] V.E. Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 43. p. 51.
[61] A. I. Kliachin. "Dinamika Etnicheskikh Sistem Passeleniia v Krymy." *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie.* no. 2. March-April. 1992. p. 27.
[62] Baron Pierce Balthazar von Campenhausen. *Travels Through Several Provinces of the Russian Empire.* London; Richard Phillips. 1808. p. 52.

Turkish nationalists who attempted to create a feeling of national identity and patriotic loyalty to a Turkish state amongst the simple Muslim villagers of Anatolia encountered a similar parochialism. One frustrated Turkish nationalist wrote "In Europe, indeed, zeal for the country has taken the place of zeal for religion...But among us, if we say the word *vatan*, all that will come to the minds of our soldiers is their village squares."[63] This localized interpretation of 'homeland' is not surprising when the traditional meaning of the Arabic loan-word for homeland, *watan* (Turkified as *vatan*), is analyzed. Bernard Lewis points out that *watan* originally had very little political content and that "Normally a *watan* is a town, but it may also be a village, or, more extensively, the province in which one's village is located."[64] Prior to this period the concept of *vatan* did not include areas far from one's home even if they were inhabited by co-religionist who spoke the same language spoken in one's home village.

The localized identities found among the Turks and Tatars were discernible among the neighboring Russians who did not think of themselves as belonging to a larger nation until the early 20th century. Robert Kaiser writes "A sense of homeland among the masses is more difficult to discern during the pre-Revolutionary period. As noted above, what was *rodnoy* (homeland) to the rural population was narrowly defined as locality, and this implied that a more expansive sense of homeland was not of primary importance for the majority of the population."[65] The Crimean Tatars' sense of homeland is perhaps best reflected in the local implications for 'home place' expressed by the French word *pays* or the German *Heimat*.

In addition to their difficulties in battling the Crimean Tatars' traditional conservative Islamic basis for communal identification, the Crimean Tatar nationalist intelligentsia of the early 20th century was thus faced with the task of unifying a peasant people that still did not think of themselves as a unified ethno-nation or of their homeland as extending beyond their immediate vicinity. While there were factors operating in the Fatherland Society's favor, such as the Crimean Tatars' cultural unity in opposition to the Russian 'Other',

[63] Bernard Lewis. "Vatan." *Journal of Contemporary American History*. vol. 26. (1991). p. 528.
[64] Ibid. p. 524.
[65] Robert Kaiser. *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the USSR*. Princeton, Princeton Univ. Press, 1994. p. 86.

their strong sense of Islamic identity and their shared oppressed peasant status, the task of imparting an understanding of a wider sense of homeland and nation among the simple peasants was to be no simple task.

That the Crimean Tatar nationalist elite would be able to unite their divided people on the basis of their shared linguistic, ethnic, and historical commonalties was not in fact a foregone conclusion.[66] In addition to the difficulties in unifying the traditionally divided Tats and Nogais, the leaders of the Fatherland Society were faced with the tremendous task of politicizing an apolitical, passive peasant population that had no tradition of assertiveness or political participation. As Vozgrin notes "Alas, we must recognize the complete absence of political activity among the Tatars of this period. Opposition was noticeable, and not unusual, but it was passive and expressed itself exclusively in emigration out of the empire."[67]

On the eve of the Revolution, the leadership of the Young Tatars and Fatherland Society were aided in their struggle to unify and nationalize their countrymen by several factors. Firstly, the Crimea was a compactly defined "island" homeland and easy to identify with in the common imagination. Secondly, and most importantly, the Crimean Tatars had the collective memory of historical statehood to turn to in their search to legitimize their own aspirations for nationhood.

As with other ethnic groups in Europe, members of the Crimean intelligentsia had a growing awareness of their people's proud history and the Crimean Khanate provided this group with a wealth of nationalist symbols and icons. After exploring their people's history, members of the Crimean Tatar nationalist leadership in Istanbul, for instance, rediscovered the *Tarak Tamgha* crest of the Giray dynasty and placed this emblem on a flag of blue (blue being the sacred color of the pagan Turkic tribes) making the Crimean Tatars among the first (if not *the* first) Muslim nations in the world to devise a national flag. In addition, the Crimean Tatar nationalists

[66] Paul Brass points out that "the formation of ethnic communities is not a given state of affairs in ethnically heterogeneous societies, but is a process that often involves the transcendence of traditional and narrower bonds to one's local place, kinship group, or caste and the growth of wider loyalties to language or religious communities." Paul Brass. "Ethnicity and Nationality Formation." *Ethnicity*. vol. 3. 1976. p. 229.
[67] V. Vozgrin. op. cit. no. 43. p. 309.

constantly stressed the historic unity of the Crimean Tatar people in an attempt to gloss over divisions based on sub-ethnic allegiances among the people.

As World War I broke it in 1914, the Crimean Tatars were certainly among the most nationally developed and unified Muslim ethnic groups in the Russian Empire as a result of these efforts. The Fatherland Society had succeeded in establishing nationalist cells in villages throughout the Crimea which stressed the unity of the Crimean Tatar nation; traditionalist Islam had been discredited in many common Crimean Tatars' eyes; a sense of 'Crimean Tatarness' had begun to subsume more localized identities, and the Crimean Tatars were increasingly led by an intelligentsia that defined its links to the Crimea in secular nationalist not religious terms.

One must not, however, see the Crimean Tatars of 1914 as fully developed nation. Islam and regional loyalties as a basis for communal identification were still prevalent for the majority of the Crimean Tatar peasantry and the national platform of the well organized Fatherland Society was still largely an elite phenomenon. Galina Yemelianova's description of the Volga Tatars, who were just as developed in nationalist terms as the Crimean Tatars at this time, could very well have applied to the Crimean Tatars of 1914. Yemelianova claims "..at the turn of the 19th century the large majority of Tatars, especially in rural areas, maintained a traditional way of life and continued to perceive themselves in local and religious terms."[68] This situation also applied to the Central Asian Muslims who were far less developed than the Volga and Crimean Tatars.[69]

Ironically enough, it was to be the Crimean Tatars' experience during the Soviet period that was to see the final development of a mass-based, unified Crimean Tatar national identity that subsumed local identities and the earlier communal attachment to the Islamic community. While conservative *mullahs* and later idealistic young

[68] Galina Yemelianova. "The National Identity of the Volga Tatars at the Turn of the 19th Century: Tatarism, Turkism and Islam." *Central Asian Survey*. 1997. 16 (4). p. 562.

[69] Alexandre Bennigsen writes "The feeling of belonging to a Kazakh or Turkmen nation was experienced only by a restricted modernist intelligentsia. So, before 1917 among the Muslim public there was not, and there could not be, a consciousness of belonging to a modern well-delineated nation." Alexandre Bennigsen. "Islamic or Local Consciousness Among Soviet Nationalities?" *Soviet Nationality Problems*. ed. Edward Allworth. New York; Columbia University Press. 1971. p. 176.

nationalists played the dominant role in shaping Crimean Tatar identity prior to the Soviet period, it was to be commissars and Communist bureaucrats shaped by the works of Marx and Engles who were to propel the Crimean Tatar masses into the final stages of national development. It was the Soviet state that completed the development of a secular Crimean Tatar national identity (in a Sovietized form) and the construction of the Crimea as a homeland that was increasingly defined by the Russian term *rodina* (homeland).

The center of Crimean Tatar development during the succeeding two decades of Soviet rule was to be Simferopol, the capital of the newly established Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. With its factories, university, museums, and regional Communist Party buildings, this Soviet administrative center on the Salgir river was to be focus of a transformation that was to see the Crimean Tatars complete their long journey of national identity construction and emerge as a secular nation.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

SOVIET HOMELAND. THE NATIONALIZATION OF CRIMEAN TATAR IDENTITY IN THE USSR

One of the least explored chapters in Crimean history has been the role of the Soviet state in shaping the modern national identity of the Crimean Tatars. While the contemporary Crimean Tatars are quick to laud the role of their own national heroes, such as Ismail Gasprinsky, Adbureshid Mehdi, Numan Çelebi Cihan and Cafer Seydahmet, in developing the Crimean Tatar nation, few recognize the crucial role that the Soviet state played in constructing the territorialized, national identity of today's Crimean Tatars. Far from attempting to eradicate Crimean Tatar national identity, in the first two decades of Soviet rule, the Soviet regime actually promoted Crimean Tatar national development.

Soon after gaining final control over the Crimean Peninsula in 1920, the Soviet government created a Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR)—the second highest territorial ranking in the Soviet federal system after the Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR)—and promoted the development of Crimean Tatar national identity (inadvertently during the 1930s) in this republic right up until the outbreak of World War II.

The effects of this state-sponsored identity construction can still be seen today in the Crimean Tatars' maximalist, Soviet-era demands for the re-establishment of a territorial autonomy in the Crimea that recognizes their unique claim to this land. In 1991 the Crimean Tatars were unsuccessful in their bid to have the Crimean Republic reestablished as an autonomous unit with 1920s Soviet-style, ethnically-based prerogatives for its indigenous population. Instead, in a preemptive move, the local Russian population voted to establish an autonomous territorial republic within the Ukraine that made no special allowances for the Crimean Tatars' unique claim to this land as the native population of the Crimea.

There is today considerable disagreement between Russian nationalists on one hand and Crimean Tatars on the other as to the exact nature of the original Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic established by Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin (the republic

was downgraded and transformed into an *oblast*-district within the Russian Federation after the deportation). The debate revolves around the issue of whether the Crimean ASSR of 1921-1945 was established as a *national* autonomous unit, in recognition of the Crimean Tatars' unique claim to their homeland, or whether it was established as a multi-national *territorial* autonomy. In this respect the Crimea is one of the most unusual territorial constructs to come out of the Soviets' vast policy of republic construction, known as the Great Delimitation *(Razmezhevanie)* since the status of the native population in the Crimean autonomy was never clearly defined.

Today those opposed to the Crimean Tatars' claims point out that the Crimean Tatars were a minority (25%) of the population in the Crimea at the time of the founding of the original Crimean republic in 1921. These voices argue the Crimean Tatars' small percentage of the Crimea's total population at this time precluded any discussion of this republic being established in recognition of Crimean Tatar identity or this group's unique claim to the Crimea. The Russian population of the Crimea stress that the Crimean ASSR was founded as a multi-national, territorial republic and emphatically state that the Crimean ASSR "never was a national autonomy."[1] According to this reasoning, the "international" Crimean ASSR never was a Crimean *Tatar* ASSR *per se*. In this respect, the Crimean ASSR had similarities to the multi-ethnic Yugoslav republic of Bosnia which did not recognize any nationality.

The Crimean Tatars on the other hand claim that the Crimean Republic was established, as were all other Soviet autonomous republics, in recognition of a territory's indigenous population and this group's unique claim to be its *korennoi narod* (native people). Crimean Tatar nationalists who proclaim that the Crimean ASSR was created for the Crimean Tatars point out that "Those who say that the Crimean ASSR was territorial and not national forget that autonomy did not occur without nationality."[2] The issue of the Crimean Tatars' claim to the Crimean ASSR based on 'indigenousness' *(korennoinost')* takes on particular significance in this argument. A contemporary Crimean Tatar historian, R.I. Muzafarov writes "on the territory of the Crimea at that time there was only one indigenous

[1] V. N. Sagatovskii. "Tavrida Internatsional'naia." *Krymakaia ASSR, 1921-1945. Voprosy, Otvety*. Simferopol; Tavria. 1990. p. 36.

[2] R.I. Muzafarov. "ASSR Natsional'naia." *Krymskaia ASSR, 1921-1945. Voprosy, Otvety*. Simferopol; Tavria. 1990. p. 28.

people, the Crimean Tatars, all the rest, Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, were only national groups who appeared as a portion of their nation."[3]

Although the Crimean Tatars were not the *de jure* titular nationality of the Crimean Republic (as the Volga Tatars were in the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic established for the Volga Tatars for example), Crimean Tatar activists claim that they were the *de facto* state-sponsored minority in a republic established in recognition of their nationality. Crimean Tatars emphasis the fact that the Soviet system recognized the Crimean Tatars as the Crimean population with the most legitimate claim to the Crimea as a national homeland-republic. The Crimean Tatar leadership is also quick to point out that the Crimean ASSR was established, in part, as a propaganda showcase designed to win over the public sympathy of the Tatar diaspora in Turkey and of the Turks themselves. Crimean Tatars stress that, with the deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944, this republic lost its *rasion d'être* (i.e. to recognize the Crimean Tatar nation) and was subsequently abolished by the Soviet authorities.

In 1994, Mustafa Dzhemilev spoke out on the issue of the Crimean Tatars' unique claim to the Crimean ASSR, stating:

> The opinion is spread around by agitators from the party and bureaucratic apparatus, banal historians, and publicists to the effect that the Crimean Republic was established in 1921 not along national lines, but territorial, and the Crimean Tatars had only a very distant relationship to this republic. In publications from the beginning of the 1920s in connection with the establishment of the Crimean SSR (sic), it is clearly indicated that the republic was established in the interests of and in order to satisfy the rights of the core population-the Crimean Tatars... Nor did the Bolsheviks conceal their propagandistic goals, which might be achieved through the establishment of the republic. They wrote that the Crimean SSR might become a torch that would enlighten the peoples of the Muslim East, and that the problems of Muslim peoples, formerly oppressed by tsarism, were now being justly resolved in the new Russia.[4]

To Russian claims that the Crimean ASSR was not a Crimean Tatar ASSR (as demonstrated by the clear absence of any reference to the

[3] Ibid.

[4] Mustafa Dzhemilev. "The Crimean Tatars' Thorny Path to their Homeland." *Central Asian Monuments*. ed. H.B. Paksoy. Armonk, N.Y.; M.E. Sharpe. 1994. p. 175.

Crimean Tatars in the republic's title) the Crimean Tatars point to the existence of several autonomous territories or republics in the Soviet Union that did not officially recognize the state-sponsored nationality in their title, despite the fact that they were clearly ethnically based units. Among these they point to Nagorno Karabagh (an Armenian territorial unit in the mountains of the republic of Azerbaijan), Dagestan (a multi-ethnic republic in Russia meaning Land of Mountains) and Nakichevan (an Azerbaijani autonomy between Armenia and Turkey), none of which have references to nationality in their titles. As to the argument that the Crimean Tatars, as a mere 25% of the Crimea's 1921 population, did not merit an ethnically-based territorial unit in the Crimea, Crimean Tatar nationalists point to the fact that territorial autonomies were established for the Komis, Yakuts, Volga Tatars, Mordvins, Udmurts, and other ethnic groups who were also minorities in their autonomous units. In some cases, the Crimean Tatar nationalists point out that the proportion of members of the titular minority in their eponymous republic was extremely low. For instance, the Karelians made up only 11% of their territorial autonomy and the Abkhaz made up only 17% of their republic in the late Soviet period.[5]

It will be argued here that, while the Crimean ASSR was not officially an ethnically-based republic on paper (such as the Uzbek SSR, the Checheno-Ingush ASSR etc.), it had all the hallmarks of a national republic. For all intents and purposes, the Crimean ASSR was, from 1921-1945, established as an unofficial Crimean Tatar republic and the Crimean Tatars were the state-sponsored 'native people' *(korennoi narod)* of this autonomy. It will also be shown that it was the experience of two decades of nation construction in this republic that completed the development of a mass-based, modern Crimean Tatar national identity.

Herein lies a conundrum for many Crimean Tatar nationalists. In arguing that the Crimean ASSR was an unofficial Crimean Tatar ASSR they must also accept that the fact that the Soviet state (the *bete noire* of Crimean Tatar nationalism) contributed to the consolidation of modern Crimean Tatar identity through its policies of nativization in an ethnically-based territorial unit.

[5] The Abhkaz proportion has risen considerably since the expulsion of almost half of the republic's Georgian population from the Gali region after war broke out here between Russian-supported Abkhazians and Georgians in 1992. R. I. Muzafarov. op. cit. no. 2. p. 29.

Before analyzing this process of state-sponsored nation building in the Soviet context, one must first, however, turn to the brief struggle fought by Crimean Tatar nationalists to create a Crimean Tatar state during World War I. Events that took place in this period were to forge a pantheon of national martyrs, memories of lost statehood and symbols that have, since the collapse of the Soviet state, become the cherished icons of modern Crimean Tatar nationalism.

The Formation of the Crimean Kurultay

During World War I the members of the Fatherland Society continued to organize underground nationalist cells throughout the Crimea despite the danger of arrest by the Tsarist police who considered this to be yet another example of Crimean Tatar war-time treason. This work was not impeded by the fact that the two leading members of the Fatherland Society, Cafer Seydahmet and Numan Çelebi Cihan, were drafted into the Russian army at the outset of the war. Most Crimean Tatars who were drafted fought in two light Tatar cavalry squadrons known as the Crimean Cavalry Regiment. Not surprisingly, the drafting of Crimean Tatar nationalists into these squadrons led to the formation of nationalist cells within this highly distinguished unit.

With the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in February of 1917 and the ending of firm Russian police rule in the Crimea, the underground Crimean Tatar nationalist cells emerged into the open. It was at this time the idea of the Crimea as the Crimean Tatars' sacred homeland began to be openly propagated among the wider Crimean Tatar populace. The majority of the Crimean Tatar population had yet to conceptualize the Crimean Peninsula in nationalist terms. For many Crimean Muslim peasants the Crimea was simply the Tauride Province of the Russian Empire.[6]

This situation began to change as nationalist entrepreneurs began to take advantage of the gradual breakdown in central author-

[6] That this was the case amongst the uneducated Crimean Muslim masses in 1917 was not the exception in the Russian Empire. Robert Kaiser writes "On the eve of World War I, with the exception of the indigenous nations of the more developed northwest (Polish, Finnish, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian) mass based perceptions of national homeland were only beginning take shape." Robert Kaiser. *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the Soviet Union.* Princeton; Princeton University Press. 1994. p. 94.

ity throughout the Crimea in winter of 1916 to gain influence among the Tatar villagers. In the spring of 1917 this agitation bore its first fruit as 2,000 popularly elected delegates from Tatar villages throughout the Crimea (the vast majority of whom were nationalists with ties to the Fatherland Society) convened an 'All Crimean Muslim Congress' in Simferopol to determine the fate of their people. At this meeting a Crimean Muslim Central Executive Committee was chosen and it promptly elected Numan Çelebi Cihan as the Crimean *Müfti* and Cafer Seydahmet as head of a commission in charge of *vakıf* affairs (although both of these leaders were still serving in the Russian army at the time). Upon their return to the Crimea, these dynamic leaders established plans for the creation of a more permanent ruling organization for the Crimean Tatars to be known by the ancient Tatar word *Kurultay* ('Congress' originally a gathering of tribal *beys* to choose a new Khan). The resurrection of the ancient Tatar-Mongol term *Kurultay*, which had no Islamic significance, was clear indication of the Crimean Tatar nationalist movement's rejection of an Islamic platform.

Among the most important measures taken by the *Kurultay* was the decision to call for Crimean cultural autonomy.[7] In addition, Çelebi Cihan demanded that the *Vakıf* Commission, which had been established by the Russian government in 1885 to control these lands, transfer control over this vast property to his authority. This effort to regain control of the Crimean land culminated in Çelebi's declaration that "All *vakıf* property and capital from the taxation of this property is considered national property belonging to the Crimean Tatars."[8] The entire Crimean Tatar people were considered by the nationalists to be the exclusive inheritors of this unique historical patrimony with roots that lay in the distant khanate's past.

In spite of the *Kurultay's* demands, the Provisional Government, which assumed power in Petrograd/St. Petersburg after the overthrow of the Tsar, reconfirmed the state's control of the *vakıf* lands and maintained the conservative *mullahs* on them as the state's representatives. Not surprisingly, this led to the growth of tension between the representatives of the old order and the increasingly popular Crimean Tatar nationalists. Acting under the influence of the

[7] Djafer Seidamet. *La Crimee. Passe-Present Revindications des Tatars de Crimee.* Lausane; Imprimerie G. Vaney-Burnier. 1921. p. 75.

[8] M.F. Bunegin *Revoliutsia i Grazhdanskaia Voina v Krymu (1917-1920 gg.).* Simferopol; Krymgosizdat. 1927. pp. 44-45.

nationalists, Crimean Tatar peasants began seizing both *vakıf* land and land belonging to *pomeshchiks* throughout the Crimea. A new spirit of assertiveness had begun to make its appearance among this passive community of peasants as central authority waned and nationalist sentiments spread among many segments of the population.[9]

As this mood spread, the defenders of the old order, the *mullahs* and *mirzas,* actively worked with the Provisional Government against the nationalists from within their own ethnic group. In early September 1917, the reactionary clerics were still planning to oust Çelebi Cihan by relying on the "religious attitude of the mass of the Tatar population."[10] In response, Çelebi Cihan declared that the new foundations for Crimean Tatar society were not to be decided by the Islamic clergy, whose legitimacy he claimed had been tainted by their links to the Tsarist government. Çelebi Cihan also spoke out against the *mirzas* and, by the end of the summer "The reactionaries were driven away and for the time being their open activities ceased."[11] The moribund Islamic clergy's fate was sealed with the establishment of a Crimean Tatar nationalist party in the summer of 1917 known as the *Milli Firka* (Nationalist Party). Soon thereafter the Crimean Tatar nationalists moved to assume control throughout the Tatar villages and towns of the Crimea .

In December of 1917 an election was held among the Crimean Tatars to chose candidates from throughout the Crimea for the *Kurultay* and members of the *Milli Firka* dominated the elections. This election was notable for the fact that universal suffrage was extended and Tatar women throughout the Crimea were given the right to vote for local representatives to the *Kurultay*. It should be noted that this was actually the first time women were given the right to vote in the Muslim world and preceded suffrage in many Western countries.

On December 9, 1917, the first Crimean Tatar *Kurultay* was held in the khan's palace in Bahçesaray, a site replete with national symbolism for the Crimean Tatar nation. At this time the delegates posed for a group photograph before the *Demir Kapı* (Iron Gate, the ornate entrance to the Khan's palace on which could be found the Giray dynasty *Tarak Tamgha*) and this picture survives to this day. The first

[9] A. K. Bochagov. *Milli Firka. Natsional'naia Kontrrevoliutiia v Krymy*. Simferopol; Krymskoe Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo. 1930. p. 40.
[10] A. K. Bunegin. op. cit. no. 8. p. 89.
[11] Ibid. pp. 89-90.

thing that strikes those viewing this picture is the relative youthfulness of the *Kurultay's* two most prominent leaders, Cafer Seydahmet and Numan Çelebi Cihan, who were both in their early thirties. It was these two young leaders, shaped by the reform movement of the Young Turks and the notions of Western democracy, liberalism and nationalism that were to be the guiding forces in the creation of the extraordinary Crimean constitution. The constitution drawn up by these two leaders was undoubtedly the most progressive of its kind in the Muslim world and declared among other things:

> The *Kurultay*, standing on the principle of equality, recognizes and affirms complete equality of women with men and commissions parliament to uphold this law.
>
> The *Kurultay* considers as a necessity in public life: freedom of identity, word, press, conscience, meeting, dwelling, union, protest, and protection of life and work as practicable principles of self determination of peoples and rights of minorities. These laws which are guaranteed by the *Kurultay* may be guaranteed only in a democratic republic recognized and proclaimed as the Crimean democratic republic.[12]

As the Crimean Tatars organized around the *Kurultay* they were acutely aware of the fact that the local Russian population felt threatened by their activities (as was the case throughout the Russian Empire when the local Russian populations were confronted with non-Russian national movements). In order to assuage the Russian population's fears the *Kurultay* announced that it was "against the Tatarization of the Crimea" and declared:

> If we convoke a Tatar national constituent assembly or *'Kurultay'* then it is only in order to explain ourselves and reveal to others the will of the Tatar nationality, however, the voice of the Tatars is still not the voice of the entire Crimea. For this to occur it is necessary to convene an all-Crimean constituent assembly, which should include the participation of all peoples inhabiting the Crimea.[13]

The *Kurultay's* position on foreign policy was, however, less flexible and shows that, while the Crimean Tatar leadership officially respected the rights of the non-Tatar Slavic majority in the Crimea (the Ukrainians and the Russians made up 50% of the Crimea's popu-

[12] Ibid. p. 326.
[13] B.G. Zarubin and A.G. Zarubin. "Krymskotatarskoe Natsional'noe Dvizhenie v Nachale 1918 g." *Istoriia i Arkeologiia Iugo-Zapadnogo Kryma.* ed. Iu. M. Mogarachev. Simferopol; Tavria. 1993. p. 205.

lation), the nationalists felt that the Crimean Tatar nation had a unique claim to the Crimea as a homeland. An article which appeared in a Crimean Tatar newspaper *Golos Kryma* (Voice of the Crimea) at this time announced "Let it be known that the Crimean Tatars will not allow anyone to establish any sort of hegemony over the Crimean Peninsula. The Crimean Tatars will not abandon their territory without a determined defense of their rights and the attainment of freedom."[14] This statement clearly shows that the Crimean Tatars' conceptualization of the Crimea as their nation's national homeland had come a long way in just 4 years and certain segments of the Crimean Tatar population were willing to fight for this territory rather than abandon it as their ancestors had.

By this time the Crimean Tatar leadership had come to demand not just cultural autonomy for the Crimea but territorial autonomy. This escalation in demands was soon to be supported by a viable Crimean Tatar military force. With the long awaited transfer of the Crimean Tatar cavalry from the war front to the Crimea, a master stroke achieved by Cafer Seydahmet, the *Kurultay* had a military force of approximately 3,000 soldiers (actually a mixture of cavalry and dragoons) at its disposal to implement its authority throughout the Crimea. In a short time the Crimean Tatar government used this division to assume control over most of the disorganized Crimean Peninsula. It soon became evident to all that by the fall of 1917 the Crimean Tatars were better organized than the local Russian and Ukrainian populations and were the most unified force in the Crimean Peninsula.

By the fall of 1917 the *Kurultay* felt strong enough to open diplomatic relations with the Young Turk government in Turkey and the growing ties between Turkey and the Crimean Tatar government were evinced on many levels. An Ottoman fleet, for example, visited the Crimea in May of 1917 and was warmly received by the local Tatars, the Young Turk leader Talat Pasha met with Cafer Seydahmet and pledged his support for Crimean independence and newspapers in Istanbul were full of calls for an Ottoman-Crimean-German alliance.[15]

[14] A. K. Bunegin. op. cit. no. 8. p. 50.

[15] Furthermore, the Ottomans informed their German allies that they considered the Crimea to be within their zone of influence and lobbied on behalf of Crimean independence with the Germans who were then advancing towards the peninsula. Charles Hostler. *The Turks of Central Asia.* Westport Connecticut; Praeger. 1993. pp. 44-45.

In spite of all these activities, the Crimean Tatar *Kurultay's* influence did not, however, extend to Sevastopol, site of the Black Sea Fleet headquarters. The vast majority of sailors and marines in this strategic naval base had, by 1917, thrown in their lot with the Bolshevik party and were disinclined to acknowledge the *Kurultay's* authority. As these two centers of power began to compete for influence in the Crimea, it was obvious that a showdown was inevitable. Realizing the strength of the Bolsheviks, the left leaning Çelebi Cihan was interested in negotiating a power sharing deal with the Sevastopol Bolsheviks. In his own words Çelebi Cihan warned "I am convinced that the Bolsheviks represent such a force that no weapons can suppress them."[16] Çelebi Cihan's warning was, however, ignored by the right wing of the *Milli Firka,* headed by Cafer Seydahmet, and in any case the Bolsheviks rejected overtures from the *Kurultay*.

In January 1918 a division of approximately 3,000 Bolshevik marines and sailors armed with machine guns and two cannon marched on the headquarters of the *Kurultay* in Simferopol with the intention of eliminating this ethnically-based challenge to Bolshevik (and local Russian) power in the Crimean Peninsula. The Crimean Tatar government found itself outgunned and retreated only to be caught by the Bolsheviks outside Simferopol at the Suren train station. Prior to engaging the Bolsheviks Cafer Seydahmet is reported to have given the following speech to his troops:

> Comrades, today the Crimean soldiers are the first to swear an oath to truly and faithfully serve their homeland, their nation and to obey its founding laws. When the vast Russian empire falls into anarchy, when out of 170 million Russians not even 50 people are guaranteed safety from danger, when robbery, murder and crime occurs everywhere and Russia is flowing with blood, when the personal rights and culture of Russian citizens are crushed underfoot, the Crimean Muslims in the Crimea uphold and defend the general peace and quiet and will not crush the Crimea underfoot. Therefore, today the Crimeans will not only be defending their own interests but the interests of all Crimeans.[17]

Although the Crimean Tatar cavalry had considerable experience earned on the battlefields in the West, the Bolsheviks' superior fire power enabled them to disperse the Crimean Tatar forces. Many

[16] B.G. Zarubin. op. cit. no. 13. pp. 209-210.

[17] A. K. Bunnegin op. cit no. 8 p. 45.

members of the Crimean Tatar force, such as Numan Çelebi Cihan, were captured by the Bolsheviks after this defeat. The majority of the Tatar force retreated to the Yaila mountains or, like Cafer Seydahmet, fled south across the Black Sea to Turkey. According to a Bolshevik account "The leaders of the *Milli Firka* party went into hiding and continued their black work. Creating conflicts between the unenlightened masses of the Tartar peasantry and Soviet troops."[18]

Having captured the president of the *Kurultay*, Numan Çelebi Cihan (who remained in Simferopol hoping to negotiate with the Bolsheviks), the Sevastopol Bolsheviks exhibited appalling political myopia and had this leader of the *Kurultay*, who had been willing to work with the Bolsheviks, killed in Sevastopol and his body thrown into the Black Sea.[19] While this action was probably carried out without the blessing of the Bolshevik central leadership, it certainly did not strengthen Bolshevik relations with the local Tatar population. On the contrary, by killing Çelebi Cihan the Sevastopol Bolsheviks created the first *milli şehit* (national martyr) to the Crimean Tatar cause and his death led to a radicalization of the Crimean Tatar populace. Çelebi Cihan's sacrifice is still remembered today by Crimean Tatars throughout the Crimea and in the diaspora. Çelebi Cihan's nationalist ode 'I Pledge' *(Ant Etkenmen)* has become both the national anthem of the Crimean Tatar nation and a commemoration of Çelebi Cihan's sacrifice for his people. Çelebi Cihan's verses are full of nationalist allusions and state:

> I pledge to heal the wounds of my nation,
> Why should my unfortunate brothers rot away?
>
> I pledge to bring light to that darkened country,
> How may two brothers not see one another?
>
> I pledge to give my word to die for knowledge,
> Knowing, seeing, to wipe away the teardrops of my nation.[20]

During the Central Asian exile, the singing of Çelebi Cihan's 'I Pledge' became a means for expressing national identity when all

[18] N.B. "Crimean Tatars and Revolution." *Soviet Russia, Official Organ of the Russian Government Bureau.* Sat. Sept. 11. 1920. vol. III. no. 11. p. 259.

[19] Harold Shukman. ed. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the Russian Revolution.* Oxford; Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1994. p. 250.

[20] Seyit Ahmet Kirimca. "Symbols. The National Anthem and Patriotic Songs by Three Poets." *Tatars of the Crimea. Return to the Homeland.* ed. Edward Allworth. Durham; Duke University Press. 1998. p. 74.

other outlets were forbidden to the Crimean Tatars. With the return of the Crimean Tatars to the Crimea, this anthem was openly sung in the historic second *Kurultay* held in Simferopol in 1992. Çelebi Cihan's legacy is still felt today on many levels in the Crimea and among the Crimean Tatar diaspora. A well known portrait of Numan Çelebi Cihan, with his Nogai features and youthful appearance, for example, hung above Mustafa Dzhemilev during the historic second *Kurultay* held by the returning Crimean Tatars in Simferopol and can be found on the walls of the *Kirim Turkleri Amerikan Birliği* (Association of the Crimean Turk Americans) in New York. Çelebi Cihan's face also appears in a stylized form on Crimean Tatar journals, on the walls of the Crimean Tatars' parallel government headquarters in Simferopol, and on banners hanging in Crimean Tatar associations in Turkey. I also found a simple monument built in honor of this *büyük şehit* (great martyr) on the grounds of the restored Cuma Cami mosque in Evpatoriia. This marker was built by one of Çelebi Cihan's descendants (who is now caretaker of Sinan Pasha's famous mosque) and the inscription on the monument reads in Tatar "Our pledged national martyr, Numan Çelebi Cihan was slain in Ak Yar, The Black Sea is my grave, the white waves my shroud."

The Struggle for Power in the Crimea, 1918-1920

Having killed the leader of the Crimean Tatar national movement, the Bolsheviks proceeded to ravage the Crimean countryside and engaged in "mass slaughter" in Bahçesaray and Simferopol.[21] By the spring of 1918 the Sevastopol Bolsheviks had, however, begun to fall apart as the German offensive against the crumbling Russian Empire cut them off from Russia proper. As the victorious Germans approached the Crimea, the leaders of the Sevastopol Bolshevik party fled first to Yalta, then to Alushta where they were captured by Crimean Tatars who controlled much of the coast and Yaila mountain range.

After the earlier execution of their president, the Crimean Tatar nationalist guerrillas appear to have had little mercy for the Bolsheviks and, in April of 1918, the captured Crimean Bolshevik leader-

[21] Alan Fisher. *The Crimean Tatars.* Stanford; Hoover Institution Press. 1978. p. 120.

ship was executed in Yalta.[22] In an interesting counter to the Crimean Tatars' recognition of Çelebi Cihan's national martyrdom, the Bolsheviks subsequently "deified" the executed Bolsheviks as "socialist heroes" of the struggle against "counter-revolutionary bands of *Milli Firkists*."[23]

This willingness to resort to bloodshed on the part of the Crimean Tatars represents a transformation of the passive Crimean Tatar peasant into what has been described in the Balkan context as an "ethno-warrior." As in the Balkans, the nationalization of both the Russian and Crimean Tatar communities in the Crimea destroyed much of the good will which had long existed between the peasants of both communities.

As the German army approached the Crimea during the closing days of World War I, Cafer Seydahmet left his place of asylum in Turkey and met with German officials to organize a Muslim cavalry unit in Romanian Dobruca with the aim of assisting the Germans. In the summer of 1918, this Tatar force, headed by a Russified Lithuanian Tatar, General Suleiman Sulkiewicz (who had earlier led the Russian Muslim Corps), joined with the *Millli Firka* forces still operating in the Crimea and assisted the German army in defeating the Bolsheviks in the peninsula. In the aftermath of the German victory in the Crimea, Seydahmet and the newly regrouped *Kurultay* had great hopes for some form of Crimean Tatar autonomy under the Germans. Interestingly enough, the *Kurultay* leadership also hoped for the return to the Crimea of their lost *"kardeşler"* (brothers) who were found scattered throughout the Balkan and Turkish diasporas. In a letter from the July 21, 1918 to the German High Command, the Crimean Tatar nationalist leadership, for the first time, spoke of returning this diaspora to the Crimean homeland:

> To the German Supreme Command
>
> The Crimean Tatar people who, owing to the fall of the Crimean Khanate 135 years ago, fell under Russian yoke and have been fortunate to have the possibility to report their political aspirations to the attention of the German Government...From the statistical collection of the *Zemstvo* of the former Tauride province for 1915 one sees that up to the year 1790, 300,000 Tatars abandoned the Crimea as a result of injustices and, in the period from 1860-1862, another 181,177 Tatars left. As a result it turned out that 687 villages were completely abandoned in the Crimea.
>
> One section of the oppressed people, who suffered thousands of hardships and oppressions, sought refuge in Dobruca and Bulgaria, but the main part settled in Turkey...
>
> If the entreaties of the emigrants were to be heeded and they were guaranteed a return to the Crimea, then one would assume the Crimean Tatars would make up 75-80% of the Crimean population. Those Tatars who migrated to Turkey and Dobruca cannot forget their historical connection with the Crimea and day and night, in their literature as in their songs, they pour forth grief over being reunited with the Crimea. In spite of all the cruel acts of oppression, the size of the Crimean Tatars could not be shaken. Equally, no acts of oppression could make them forget that respect held by the supremacy of their ancestors, before whom Moscow once bowed. The castles of Oskiuz Kapa, from the era of Tatar dominion, ruined mosques, closed educational institutions and, like a pitiful shadow of past glorious might, the destroyed religious-legal institutions, all instilled in them a glorious belief in liberation and gave them energy.[24]

The German administration of the Crimea, headed by General Sulkiewicz appears to have acted on this request for help in repatriating "lost brothers in the Balkans" and Turkey and an open invitation to all Tatars living abroad to return to the Crimea was proclaimed in 1918.[25] The plan called for the offering of citizenship in the Crimea to all Crimean Tatars from the diaspora. The German occupation of the Crimea was, however, too short lived (the Germans only occupied the Crimea for 5 months) to see the implementation of the *Kurultay's* ambitious program of repatriation.

After the German evacuation of the Crimea there followed a confusing period in which local Russians, the Bolsheviks and White Armies (seeking to reconstitute to the Russian Empire) fought for control over the Crimea. As the White Armies were routed by the Bolsheviks throughout Russia, the Crimea became the last bastion for anti-Communist, White forces in the Russian Empire. The White leader, General Denikin, hoped to make the Crimea an 'island bastion of anti-Communism' (a Russian 'Taiwan' in every respect) but the Whites, who arrived with tens of thousands of Russian refugees, had no tolerance for the political movement of the indigenous Tatar population of the Crimea (many right wing Crimean Tatar nationalists fled to Turkey at this time). After considerable anti-Tatar

[22] According to another account they were murdered in Alushta. *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia.* 1937. Vol. 35. p. 314. Alan Fisher. Ibid. p. 121.
[23] Ibid. *Bol'shaia.* p. 314.

[24] A. K. Bunegin. op. cit. no. 8. p. 329.
[25] Alan Fisher. op. cit. no. 21. p. 127.

repression at the hands of the Whites the majority of the *Milli Firka* followed the left side of the party and went underground to fight with their former enemies, the Bolsheviks, against the White regime.

Many Crimean Tatars formed guerilla units to fight against the Whites who were engaged in attacks on Crimean Tatar villages and these "green bands" as they were known, proliferated in the Yaila Mountains. According to one account "For the first time since the annexation, the most peaceful and inoffensive population of the Crimea, the Tatars, took up arms, not under the influence of any sort of patriotism but completely spontaneously and on their own."[26] One cannot, however, doubt that the spread of nationalism among the Tatar and Russian population of the Crimea had the effect of leading to increased inter-ethnic violence at this time.

The most influential leader in the leftist leadership of the *Milli Firka* fighting against the Whites during this period was a Crimean Tatar socialist, Veli Ibrahimov (of whom much will be written below). As the Bolsheviks appeared closer to victory, a desperate White general, Baron Wrangel (successor to General Denikin), finally promised Ibrahimov's Crimean Tatars that, if they assisted his forces, he would discuss self-rule for the Crimean Tatars.[27] By this time the Crimean Tatars had, however, already thrown in their lot with the winning Bolshevik side and Wrangel's defenses soon collapsed.

The Prelude to the Formation of the Crimean ASSR

In October of 1920 the Bolsheviks finally succeeded in driving the Whites from the Crimea (tens of thousands were evacuated by sea to Turkey and the Balkans) and Soviet power was again established in the war torn Crimea. A new era had arrived for the Crimean Tatars who, having assisted the Bolsheviks against the Whites, expected some recognition of their national aspirations in return. There were grounds in particular for expecting some acknowledgment of Crimean Tatar nationality from the Bolshevik leader, Vladimir Lenin. Prior to the Civil War Lenin had actually singled the Crimean Tatars

[26] V.E. Vozgrin. *Istoricheskie Sud'by Krymskikh Tatar.* Moscow; Mysl'. 1992. p. 423.
[27] L. Katerina. "Bor'ba Krymskikh Tatar Protiv Vrangelia." *Istorik Marksist.* no. 5. 93. 1944. p. 75.

out in his 1917 'Proclamation to all the Muslims of Russia and the Orient' which proclaimed:

> Muslims of Russia, Tatars of the Volga and the Crimea, Kirgiz and Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan, Turks and Tatars of Transcaucasia, Chechens and mountaineers of the Caucasus and all of you whose mosques have been destroyed, whose beliefs and customs have been trampled underfoot by the tsars and the oppressors of Russia. Your beliefs and usage, and national and cultural institutions are henceforth free and inviolable. Organize your national life in complete freedom. You have the right. Know that your rights, like those of all the peoples of Russia are under the powerful safeguard of the revolution and its organs, the soviets of workers, soldiers, and peasants. Lend your support to this revolution and its government.[28]

Despite these lofty sounding words, the Bolsheviks initially appeared to be uninterested in collaborating with the Crimean Tatar leadership and quickly moved to outlaw the *Milla Firka* party as a "counter-revolutionary party." In addition, the local Communist Party made no effort to redistribute land to the landless Crimean Tatar peasants and instead established large state farms *(sovkhozes)*. Richard Pipes claims that "the heaviest losers" in the new system were the Crimean Tatars who formed the bulk of the landless peasant population in the Crimea.[29] In addition, a famine swept through the Crimea in 1921 with devastating results for the Crimean Tatars who were largely landless and impoverished. A remarkably frank report on the famine in the Soviet paper *Izvestiia* (News) records the devastating effect of this famine which led to a considerable migration of Crimean Tatar peasants to the Dobruca:

> The material collected by comrade Kalinin during his trip to the Crimea draws an extremely heavy picture of the situation of this previously flowering country...Famine has seized, first of all, the most important grain producing part of the Crimea-the southern shore-where, since the month of November, the population, which is made up predominately of Tatar poor, involved almost exclusively in agriculture and tobacco growing and viniculture, has begun to starve. That part of the population silently, without a murmur or struggle for life has died in their villages, often without exiting their huts.[30]

[28] Joseph Castagne. "Le Bolchevisme et l'Islam: Les Organisations Sovietiques de la Russie Musulmane." *Revue du Monde Musulman.* no. 51. 1922. pp. 5-6.
[29] Richard Pipes. *The Formation of the Soviet Union.* Cambridge Massachusetts; 1967. p. 190.
[30] "Po Golodnomy Krym" *Izvestiia.* no. 156. (1595). June 15, 1922. p. 4.

Thousands of Crimean Tatars died in this famine and some areas, such as the Bahçesaray district, suffered mortality rates as high as 50%. To a considerable extent, the Crimean famine was artificially caused by the local Bolshevik authorities who created state farms that did not take into consideration the previous agricultural conditions in the Crimea.

If the situation in the Crimea at this time were not bleak enough, the Bolsheviks placed the Hungarian Communist, Bela Kun, in charge of the Crimean *Cheka* (Bolshevik secret police) and his administration was given the task of weeding out all 'White Guardists' 'reactionaries', 'bourgeoisie', 'Tatar nationalists' etc. Kun appears to have relished his task and as many as 60,000 Crimeans belonging to the above mentioned classifications may have been killed in his deadly purges of the Crimean countryside and cities.[31]

In response to these activities, the Crimean Tatars again spontaneously took to the Yaila mountains and launched a guerrilla campaign against the Bolshevik authorities. When word of the anarchy in the Crimea reached Moscow, Lenin sent the highest ranking Muslim in the Bolshevik hierarchy, the Volga Tatar Mir Said Sultan Galiev (Galiev was Stalin's advisor on Muslim areas in the *Narkomnats*-the Commissariat for Nationality Affairs), on a fact finding mission to the Crimea. Galiev's report called on the Soviet government to create an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in the Crimea, halt the harmful land reform then in progress and attract the disenfranchised Tatars into the Communist Party. In response to this report, on October 1921 the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was formed under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federated Republic.

The Position of the Crimean Tatars in the Crimean ASSR

One of the most interesting aspects of the newly formed Crimean ASSR was the dominant role that the Crimean Tatars were to play in this newly organized autonomous territorial unit. Although the Crimean Tatars, whose number had declined to 150,00 by 1923, formed a mere 25% of the Crimea's population (as opposed to the Russians and Ukrainians, who together formed approximately 50%

[31] Alan Fisher. op. cit. no. 21. p. 132.

of the peninsula's population, i.e. 306,000), they were soon to fill many of the top leadership positions in the newly formed republic. The leftist *Milli Firka* leader, Veli Ibrahimov (now a Bolshevik), for example, was given the highest posts in the Crimean ASSR administration as Chairman of the Crimean Central Committee and Chairman of the Crimean Council of People's Commissars. Throughout the Crimean Republic, Crimean Tatars were placed in charge of factories, *kolkhozes* (collective farms), *sovkhozes* (state farms), town administrations and republican leadership positions.

In an interview with the Crimean Tatar diaspora leader Memet Sevdiyar (who was himself brought into the Crimean administration in the 1930s during this process), this source informed the author that Moscow's *volte face* at this time was so sudden and complete that many inexperienced, illiterate Crimean Tatar peasants found themselves in leadership positions in industry, local town administrations and even in the Republican hierarchy.[32] As in Central Asia, the Crimean Muslim population was largely agricultural at this time and there was virtually no Tatar proletariat. Most jobs in the industrial centers of Kerch, Simferopol and Sevastopol had previously been filled by Russians, Germans and Ukrainians. Many of the simple Crimean Tatar peasants given leadership slots at this time were in fact forced to rely on more qualified Russian "big brothers" to help them in their new positions. The influx of Crimean Tatars into the Crimea's industrial and governmental administrative positions was so pronounced that, when Russian workers in Sevastopol could not fill their production quotas during this period, they would justify their failure with the excuse "How can one hope to fulfill the industrial finance plan when Tatars have been put to work on the lathes?"[33]

The local Russian-dominated Communist Party appears to have been adamantly opposed to the creation of the Crimean ASSR, which soon promoted Crimean Tatars at the Russians' expense, but it was overruled by Moscow. During my stay in the Crimea I was told that those Crimean Tatars suddenly propelled from their villages into management positions were pejoratively called *"çiböreks"* (the Crimean Tatars' distinctive meat pastries) by their Russian 'comrades' during this period. That there was tension between the local Russian population and the Crimean Tatars at this time was of course largely

[32] Interview with Memet Sevdiyar. New York. February. 1999.

[33] Robert Conquest. *Soviet Nationalities Policy in Practice*. London; The Bodley Head. 1967. p. 54.

due to the state policy of promoting Crimean Tatars and their culture in the Crimea ASSR at the expense of the larger, and previously dominant Slavic population.

This process of indigenous positive discrimination was not unique to the Crimean ASSR and was actually part of a state-wide national policy being implemented throughout the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other autonomous units known as *korenizatsiia*. *Korenizatsiia* was a Soviet term based on the Russian word *koren* (root) and literally means 'rooting.' In the Soviet context *korenizatsiia* meant indigenization and positive discrimination for ethnic groups who were designated as the *korennoi narod* (rooted or native people) of a Soviet republic or smaller administrative territory. The policy of *korenizatsiia* was implemented throughout the entire Soviet Union in the 1920s and led to the creation of local leadership cadres developed from native ethnic groups for autonomous districts, autonomous republics and the highest ranking administrative territorial unit, the Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). In implementing this program, quotas were established for recruiting local ethnic populations into industry, the Communist Party, local leadership positions etc. and this led to a mass process of nativization in government, the judiciary, trade unions, newly established educational institutions and industry throughout the newly formed Soviet state.

To understand this policy one must understand the Communist leadership's views on the nationality issue in the USSR. The multi-ethnic Russian Empire had of course made no allowances for the ethnic identity of the myriad peoples who were considered *inorodtsy* (internal alien races). Similarly, Marxist Socialism considered nationality to be an anachronistic form of social organization that would eventually disappear as the class affiliation of the proletariat rendered nationality meaningless. As the workers of the world were to unite, Marx argued that this proletarian class would no longer be divided by national homelands or nationality.

Vladimir Lenin, however, had been given ample evidence of the growing importance of nationality to the multitude of ethno-national groups inhabiting the lands of the former Russian Empire during the Russian Civil War. Throughout the borderlands of the fallen Russian Empire national movements for independence had arisen, from Khokand in the Uzbek-dominated Fergana Valley, to Finland. In light of these manifestations of national identity among the non-Russian populations of the Russian Empire/USSR, Lenin appears

to have recognized the importance of nationalism and its links to territory and fought against his fellow Communists to create a federal system of territorial autonomies that would recognize ethnicity. Lenin felt that an attempt to create a homogenous proletarian state united on the basis of the Russian language (the obvious choice for a *lingua Sovietica*) would make the revolution inaccessible to the various non-Russian ethnic groups and nationalities of the new state and would antagonize their national leaderships.[34]

Lenin eventually won the day, even against Stalin, the Commissar of Nationalities (whose Caucasian origins may have made him more acutely aware of the problems that might arise from promoting ethnic identity in the new state), and the Soviet leadership engaged in a process that was to be one of the most extravagant state-sponsored, territorial recognitions of ethnicity and nationality in history. In an attempt to reach the shamanist Evenk reindeer herder, Buddhist Kalmyk shepherd, Ingush Muslim mountaineer, Georgian peasant and Uzbek cotton farmer, a nation-wide bureaucracy was established to develop the languages of even the smallest and undeveloped of "nations" in the USSR. These new state-sponsored languages, many of which received an alphabet for the first time (such as Tajik, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Kalmyk, Ingush, and Buryat), would be used as vehicles for introducing the proletarian ideology of the Communist Party to the remotest corner of the USSR. Lenin felt that "By 'fostering national cultures' and creating national autonomies, national schools, national languages and national cadres, the bolsheviks would overcome national distrust and reach national audiences."[35]

All of these policies of national identity construction (*natsional'noe stroitelstvo* in Soviet parlance) were to be territorially based and a Soviet citizen who left his ethno-territorial unit lost the prerogatives that would come from living in his titular SSR, ASSR, Autonomous District *(Oblast)* or Autonomous Territory *(Okrug)*. This was to have the effect of territorializing identity in these constructs throughout the USSR and discouraging migration. Anatoly Khazanov writes

[34] To those who fought against his plans for state's recognition of nationality, Lenin argued "If we say that we do not recognize the Finnish nation but only the toiling masses, it would be a ridiculous thing to say. Not to recognize something that is out there is impossible; it will force us to recognize it." Yuri Slezkine. "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism." *Slavic Review*. Vol. 53. no. 2. Summer 1994. p. 420.

[35] Ibid.

"Not only did Soviet legislation make ethnic affiliation ascriptive. In addition, it directly connected nationality with territory, linked ethnic status with the degree of ethno-territorial autonomy, and made cultural autonomy dependent on the level of corresponding autonomous formation."[36] A 1923 description of this 'Bantuzation' of the former Russian Empire proclaimed:

> The majestic ancient mosques of Samarkand...the white minarets of Azerbaijan; a colorful Armenian tower; a strikingly Oriental building from Kirghizia; a solid Tatar house covered with grillwork; some picturesque chinoiserie from the far east; and further on the *yurts* and *chums* from Bashkiria, Mongol-Buriatia, Kalmykia, Oiratia, Iakutia, the Khakass, the Ostiak and Samoed; all of it surrounded by the artificially created mountains and villages of Dagestan, the Caucasian Highland Republic and Chechnya...They have *their own* flag; signs in *their own* language; maps of *their own* expanses and borders; diagrams of *their own* riches. Nationality, individuality and uniqueness are forcefully emphasized everywhere.[37]

Westerners are quick to impugn the Bolshevik leadership's motives for creating this vast hierarchy of ethnically-based territorial units in the USSR. Most pass it off as a nefarious attempt at *divide et impera* (especially in the Central Asian context) or as a propaganda device meant to attract sympathy from abroad. There does, however, appear to have been a genuine attempt by the Soviet leadership to use territoriality-based positive discrimination programs to modernize some of the most socially, economically and culturally backwards ethnic groups of the USSR and to introduce them to the benefits of the revolution. Why else grant a small, relatively unknown ethnic group in Siberia, the Yakuts, political, judicial, and educational prerogatives to a vast territorial unit of their own (with considerable natural resources) if not to include this undeveloped people in the Soviet process. No program better exemplifies the Bolsheviks' real desire spread modernization to non-Russian ethnies and nations in the Soviet Union and extend to them the perceived benefits of the revolution than the policy of *korenizatsiia*.

Korenizatsiia was in addition the answer to a threat that Lenin feared the most, 'Great Russian chauvinism,' for it established quotas and preferential treatment for all *korennye narody* (native peoples) in their

[36] Anatoly Khazanov. *After the USSR. Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Politics in the Commonwealth of Independent States*. Madison; Univ. of Wisconsin Press. 1995. p. 18.
[37] A. Skachko. "Vostochnye Respubliki na S. Kh. Vystavke v 1923 godu" *Novyi Vostok*. no. 4. 1923. pp. 482-484.

own ethno-territorial autonomies, to the exclusion of Russians. In the Crimean ASSR there was no mistaking Lenin's intentions. The Crimean Tatars, as the *korennoi narod* of the Crimea, were to receive the full benefits of 'nativization.' The policy of *korenizatsiia*, developed by Lenin, and grudgingly supported by Stalin until the late 1920s, contributed to the territorialization and consolidation of Crimean Tatar nationality by supporting the development of the Crimean Tatar language, by increasing the national intelligentsia and by formally institutionalizing ethnicity in the Crimean state apparatus.

Korenizatsiia *in the Crimean ASSR*

The average Crimean Tatar living in the Crimean ASSR in the 1920s was exposed to *korenizatsiia* on many levels. While collectivization may have wrecked havoc on landowners in the Crimea, landless Crimean Tatars, as recipients of *korenizatsiia*, often stood to benefit from this process. A Soviet propaganda account from 1934, for example, trumpets the success of the Soviet state in defending the rights of Crimean Tatar peasants in comparison to the Tsarist regime:

> The Simeiz Tatars who originally owned the lands here and who were driven out by the tsarist government during the nineteenth century, were forced to surrender all their vineyards to a powerful landed proprietor by the name of Martsov, who paid for these fertile tracts only a fraction of their value, while the Tatars had to move their villages to the stony hillsides.
>
> The October Revolution redressed the wrongs of the Tatar peasants and restored them the vineyards which they had been deprived by Martsov.
>
> Now these Simeiz vineyards belong to a *kolkhoz* and there is no longer a single individual farmer in the village of Simeiz, all 82 farms of which 29 were Tatar, have united into one large collective farm.[38]

Universal education was also introduced in the Crimea and all Crimean Tatars were taught in their native language through a score of new textbooks written in Crimean Tatar (with Arabic characters initially). While only 17% of Crimean Tatar girls were enrolled in schools in 1917, the Soviets could proudly proclaim that the num-

[38] M.N. Morav. *The Crimea. Pearl of the Soviet Union*. Moscow; Intourist. 1934. p. 147.

ber had risen to 44.9 % by 1928 and this percentage was to increase in the following decade.[39] Those Crimean Tatars who graduated from school could, for the first time, go on to attend the Tauride University in Simferopol (now officially also known once again as Ak Mecit to appease the Crimean Tatars) where they could study Crimean Tatar history, language and culture in the newly established Oriental Institute.

Anthropologists and linguists trained at this institution went through the Crimean countryside systematically collecting Crimean Tatar poems, legends and stories which were produced in beautifully illustrated volumes. Crimean Tatar ethnographic museums were also established in Evpatoriia (for the Nogais), and in Yalta (for the coastal Tats). In addition, the Soviet government supported considerable archeological research in the Crimea which explored the ruins of Eski Kırım (the old regional capital of the Golden Horde) and the forgotten mountain fortress of the ancient Goths, Mangup Kale. In school, Crimean Tatar students were proudly taught by Crimean Tatar teachers that their roots *(koreny)* in the Crimea could in fact be traced back to the primordial Scythian, Greek and Gothic inhabitants of the peninsula and this led them to identify with the ancient history of their homeland-republic. Prior to this time the Tatars had very little reason to identify with the Greek and other classical monuments in the Crimea which were claimed by the Orthodox Christian population.

All of this Crimean Tatar cultural development had a Socialist subtext of course. The *mirzas* were depicted as 'bourgeoisie exploiters of the toiling working class', the Ottoman were 'Imperialists bent on enslaving the Crimean peasants' the *mullahs* were 'parasites who played on the simple Muslims' superstitions' etc. The aim was of course to subtly inculcate in the Crimean Tatars the ideas of the Revolution through the medium of their own state-sponsored language. Many progressive Crimean Tatars, *jadids* and reformers who had previously fought for modernization, education and women's rights no doubt genuinely identified with the ideals being promulgated by the Soviet system via their own language. One cannot doubt that many Crimean Tatar modernists and reformers also came to identify with the Soviet state in this early period of cultural development in the Crimean ASSR.

[39] *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia.* vol. 35. 1937. p. 302.

In addition to rooting the Crimean Tatar culture to the Crimean ASSR, the Crimean Tatar language was promoted as a state language of the Republic along with Russian. Soviet linguists, such as V.V. Radlov and the famed Crimean Tatar Turkologist, Bekir Çobanzade, created a common Crimean Tatar grammar and language based on the central mountain dialect which was a hybrid Nogai (Kipchak), Tat (Oghuz) language known as the *Orta Yolak* (Middle Road). While the Young Tatars had begun this linguistic unification movement, it was the Soviets who produced scores of grammar books, readers, children's school books and texts in a common Crimean Tatar for students at technical universities, the government bureaucracy, farming collectives, and scholarly programs. In the process they made considerable progress towards homogenizing the Crimean Tatar language.

For the first time hundreds of books were also made available to Crimean Tatars in their native language and journals and newspapers flourished in Tatar. A Crimean Tatar had the choice of journals and papers such as *Eni Dunya* (The New World), *Yaş Kuvvet* (Young Strength), *Illeri* (In Front), *Koz Aydin* (Greetings), *Proliter Medeniyeti* (Proletarian Culture), *Kadinlik Sotsializm Elinda* (Women on the Road to Socialism), *Yaş Lenindzhiler* (Young Leninists), *Kizil Krym* (The Red Crimea) and *Ilk Adim* (First Step).

Crimean Tatar was used in schools, libraries, theaters, museums and reading rooms throughout the peninsula. Newly established journals, newspapers, and books in Crimean Tatar contributed to the spread of mass literacy among the previously poorly educated Crimean Tatars by the 1930s. Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote of this indigenization process as it was applied in the Crimea "In the twenties, all those minority languages were encouraged; it was endlessly dinned into the Crimea that it was Tatar, Tatar, and nothing but Tatar; it even had the Arabic alphabet, and the signs were in Tatar."[40] A Soviet account describes *korenizatsiia* in the Crimea as follows:

> 343 primary schools and 12 secondary schools, where teaching was done in the Tatar language, were opened. Special Tatar technical schools (pedagogical, medical, village agriculture, artistic production, and others) were founded. Tatars went to study in factories and colleges. The Crimean Tatars were granted more privileges than other

[40] Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. *The Gulag Archipelago.* Vol. 5-7. New York; Harper and Row Publishers. 1976. p. 386.

> nationalities living in the Crimea. Their language along with Russian became the state language. The allocation of cultural work for the Tatar population was proportionately higher.[41]

A recent work described the era of *korenizatsiia* in the Crimea in similar terms and stresses the Crimean Tatars' unique position in this republic:

> The Crimean Tatars were actively included in all spheres of activity in the Crimean ASSR, their representation grew in the organs of the Soviet apparatus *(sovapparat);* in 1926 in the Crimean Central Committee they had 26 representatives, in the town soviets 280, in the village soviets 1,439, and from among these 159 were representatives in the administration of village soviets. It was at this time, in 1926, that the course of *korenizatsiia* emerged and called for the mandatory translation of bureaucracy into the Crimean Tatar language and the preparation of cadres for the soviet party organs and also specialists.[42]

No one who visited the Crimean ASSR during the 1920s could fail to recognize the Tatar nature of this autonomy. Paul Kolstoe writes of the Crimean ASSR as it existed from 1921 to 1944 "at that time the autonomy was usually regarded as existing by virtue of the Tatars, even though they made up no more than a quarter of the population."[43] Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay claimed that the Crimean ASSR was "one of the few Muslim territories of Soviet Russia where the political importance of the native element was greater than its numerical value."[44] Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia mention that the Crimean Tatar representation in Soviet and Party organs in the Crimea ranged from 30 to 60 percent during this period in spite of their numerical percentage of 25 percent of the republic's population.[45]

All of these examples of national identity promotion in the unofficial Crimean Tatar ASSR were of course strictly *cultural*. While the

[41] R.I. Muzafarov. "Kak Osushchetvlialos' Obuchenie Krymskotatarskogo Naseleniia v Respublike?" *Krymskaia ASSR (1921-1945)*. Simferopol; Tavria. 1990. p. 165.

[42] B. Vroshevan and P. Tygliiants. *Izganie i Vozvrashchenie*. Simferopol; Tavrida. 1994. p. 33.

[43] Paul Kostoe. *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*. Bloomington; Indiana Univ. 1995. p. 191.

[44] Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay. "The Crimean Tatars. A Retrospective Summary." *Central Asian Review*. no. 16. no. 1(1968). p. 23.

[45] Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia. "The Crimean Tatar Question and the Present Ethnopolitical Situation in the Crimea." *Russia Politics and Law*. vol. 33, no. 6. p. 44.

Soviet government supported native Crimean Tatar dance troupes (which produced 'Sovietized' versions of traditional village dances), archeological expeditions into the ancient roots of the Crimean Tatars in the Crimea and the development of vernacular Crimean Tatar into a state language, it tolerated no outward *political* manifestations of Crimean Tatar nationalism. All aspects of Crimean Tatar identity construction in the Crimean ASSR were to strictly follow the maxim 'socialist in content, national in form.' This government program of coopting nationalism and channeling it off into harmless cultural directions has been described as a "licensing" of nationality and it was a tame Soviet version of nationality that was permitted in the Crimean ASSR and various republics and autonomous territories of the USSR.[46]

In the long term the Soviet leadership expected the importance of cultural nationality to diminish as ethnic groups throughout the Soviet Union were exposed to the ideas of the proletarian revolution in schools, party meetings, newspapers, and history textbooks and mastered Russian. There were in fact two processes of identity construction underway simultaneously in the USSR during the 1920s. While 'ephemeral' nationalist identities were being constructed as a means towards moving closer to the ultimate goal of ethnic blending *(slianiye)* between the various nations of the Soviet 'Great Friendship of Nations', the Soviets were also constructing a more 'permanent' trans-national *homo sovieticus*. The new Soviet man was to be 'international' in outlook, a proletarian first, and only secondly a Soviet citizen of Uzbek, Russian, Kalmyk etc. background. Most importantly, the fully developed Soviet citizen was to identify with the Soviet *Rodina* (Homeland) first and foremost. As 'the world's first workers' state' the Soviet homeland was to be the ultimate focus of loyalty for the workers and peasants of the various constructed autonomous territorial units of the Soviet Union.

It should also be stated that the modern *homo sovieticus* was to be an atheist for there was no place in the USSR for religion, 'the opiate of the masses.' In the Crimea, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, the religious facet of national identity was ruthlessly attacked between 1931 and 1936. Hundreds of mosques were closed and there was not a single working mosque in the Crimea by 1938 according Edige

[46] Allan Kagedan. "Territorial Units as Nationality Policy." *Soviet Nationality Policies*. ed. by Henry Huttenbach. London; Mansell. 1990. p. 164.

Kirimal.[47] *Mullahs* were condemned as 'parasites' and deported to Siberia in the 1930s. Those who were outwardly religious were excluded from the Communist Party and local administrative positions and the young actively recruited into the 'Godless Society' (by 1932 there were 42,000 *Allahsizler*-'Godless Zealots' in the Crimea).[48]

In many ways, the Bolsheviks carried the struggle against 'feudal relics' (the conservative clergy) fought by the Young Tatars and *Milli Firka* to its culmination, albeit with a ruthlessness that even the leftist *Milli Firka* party members would have shied away from. By administrative caveat Moscow also changed the Crimean Tatar alphabet from Arabic to Latin and then to Cyrillic in an effort to eradicate the Tatars' traditional alphabet with it religious implications and links to the Muslim *umma* beyond the borders of the USSR. With a simple decree the Crimean Tatars were thus cut off from their religious past and from all works published in Arabic over the centuries. In effect, throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet regime was undermining the Crimean Tatars' traditional Islamic base of identity and replacing it with a secular identity based on Marxist materialism.

Unintentionally, the Soviet regime also led to an increasing identification with the Crimea as a homeland-republic by the territory's state sponsored 'native people'. The identification with the Crimean ASSR as a homeland was certainly the result of policies enacted by the Crimean ASSR's nationalist leadership headed by Veli Ibrahimov. As shall be seen, *Milli Firka* members, such as Veli Ibrahimov, who had since 1921 been coopted into the Crimean government by the Soviet regime as part of its policy of *korenizatsiia*, took advantage of this program to enact many of the policies earlier formulated by the nationalist *Milli Firka*.

The Veli Ibrahimov Years

The *Veliibrahimovshchina*, the years in which the wily Veli Ibrahimov was in power in the Crimea as the chairman of the Crimean Central Committee and Crimean Council of People's Commissars, is considered a halcyon period by Crimean Tatar nationalists. While

[47] Edige Kirimal. *Dergi.* (Munich) 1955. no. 1 pp. 55-57.
[48] Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay. *Islam in the Soviet Union.* London; Pall Mall Press. 1967. p. 150.

Kaiser points out that "National territory was for Stalin merely an empty container within which nations were created or destroyed through development or disappearance of their objective cultural features" the Crimean territory was certainly more than an "empty container" to Veli Ibrahimov and other ex-*Milli Firka* nationalists.[49] While Veli Ibrahimov may have genuinely been an internationalist and dedicated Communist, he was certainly a crypto-nationalist as well.

Veli Ibrahimov used his position to promote many of the objectives of the *Milli Firka* and indeed to directly recruit members of the Crimean Tatar nationalist party into the Crimean ASSR administration. For seven years Ibrahimov was able to quietly promote Tatarization in the Crimea, always with the stated aim of Sovietizing the working Crimean Tatar peasant class. Under Lenin's watchful but tolerant eye, Ibrahimov was also able to use the state machinery at his disposal to actively work towards the goal of instilling in his more narrowly-defined countrymen, the Crimean Tatars, a sense of identification with the Crimea as a homeland. The Soviets had given Ibrahimov and his ex-*Milli Firka* coterie access to state organs and institutions, such as mass media, and these were used by the leadership to nationalize the Crimean Tatar masses as well as to Sovietize them. The Crimean Tatar national Communists used this new power and medium to forge a mass-based sense of Crimean Tatar identity in ways the Young Tatars and Fatherland Society before them could not have dreamed of during the Russian Imperial period.

This example of a local national Communist cadre using republican institutions to construct a distinctly Soviet national identity was not unusual in the Soviet Union of the 1920s. Phillip Groder writes:

> The indigenous cadre was given an institutionalized monopoly on the public expression of ethnic identity, that is, it defined the ethnic markers that distinguish nationality. These markers were then central to communicating the socialist message in national cultural forms and propagandizing the populations being brought into the modern sector. For many Soviet citizens undergoing social mobilization the first sustained contact with the great traditions of their own ethnic group was in the form of this national-Soviet hybrid.[50]

[49] Robert Kaiser. *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the Soviet Union.* Princeton; Princeton University Press. 1994. p. 104.
[50] Philip Groder. "Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization." *World Politics.* Vol. 43. Oct. 1990-July 1991. pp. 196-232.

In addition to his policies designed to disseminate a sense of Crimean Tatar national identity, Ibrahimov also distributed land to Crimean Tatar peasants, long a desideratum of Crimean Tatar nationalists. Edige Kirimal points out that Ibrahimov also made plans for the "gradual repatriation of Crimean Turks abroad."[51] Alan Fisher claims that Ibrahimov planned to offer amnesty to all Crimean Tatars who had fled abroad in the previous decades and to encourage their participation in the development of the Crimea's economy.[52] This plan to return the Crimean Tatars from the diaspora was first mentioned at the end of an article published in *Krasnyi Krym* (the Red Crimea) in 1921 which is also interesting for its description of plans for *korenizatsiia* in the Crimea:

> The main nations inhabiting the Crimea are the Tatars, Russians and, in part, the Germans. All the remaining nations form insignificant minorities and groups around one of the three national groups having the nearest language...Of all these nations, prior to the revolution, the Tatar were oppressed doubly as a hard working population and as internal aliens *(inorodtsy)*. Therefore they remained backward, uncultured, and unyielding to the acceptance of a new life which requires a certain economic and cultural level. What is necessary to give the Crimean Tatar masses the possibility of catching up with the rest of Soviet Russia?
> Transfer the center of important work to the native sphere.
> Allot land to the Tatar peasant.
> Factually introduce the native language to the Soviet establishment.
> Involve the local population in the administration of the native territory.
> Form cadres of Soviet workers from among the Tatars, return to the Crimea those Tatars forced by Tsarism to emigrate.
> These and other measures will create solid support among the Tatar population for Soviet authority.[53]

Land reform programs instituted in this period called for the establishment of 'reservations' for the return of Crimean Tatars "expelled by Tsarism."[54] This plan to return Crimean Tatar émigrés to the Crimea may have had the Soviet center's tacit support. One has but

[51] Kirimal. "The Tragedy of the Crimea." *The Eastern Quarterly*. vol. 4. no. 1. 1951. p. 42.
[52] Alan Fisher. op. cit. no. 21. p. 139.
[53] Zainulla Bulushev. V. M. Broshevan and A.A. Formanchuk. *Krymskaia Respublika: God 1921. (Kratkii Istoricheskii Ocherk)*. Simferopol; "Tavria." 1992. p. 110.
[54] *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*. op. cit. no. 39. p. 317.

to look to the Soviet state-sponsored return of Armenians to the Armenian SSR for an example of just such a policy.[55]

In the Armenian case, the Soviet government sponsored repatriation was a subplot to its larger schemes involving Turkey and this may have also been the case in the Crimea. There are reasons for believing that the Crimean ASSR may have been established, in part, as a result of foreign policy directives aimed at Turkey. At the time of the Crimean ASSR's founding, for example, this republic was described as "yet one more brilliantly flashing beacon destined to attract all the best yearnings and aspirations of the multi-million East now under the slave yoke of the international imperialists."[56] This would not be the first time that the Soviets created a national autonomy based on foreign policy exigencies. The Circassians who numbered only 200,000 in 1917, for example, were given *four* autonomous ethnic territories in the USSR in an obvious effort to influence the large Circassian diaspora in Turkey, Jordan, Syria and Israel.[57] Sultan Galiev, the Volga Tatar Communist who called for the establishment of the Crimean ASSR, was certainly aware of the "five million" Crimean Tatars in Turkey. In addition, with its long history of ties to Turkey, the Crimea could serve as a springboard for spreading the Communist revolution to the Muslim Middle East. Alexandre Bennigsen claims that Sultan Galiev urged that Communism should be spread abroad, and said that the Soviet republic of the Crimea "ought to become the window of Communism opening towards the East, and first of all towards Turkey."[58]

At the time this may not have been as far fetched a scheme as it may now seem. The *Turkish Socialist Party*, the *Socialist Party of* the

[55] Robin Cohen. *Global Diasporas, An Introduction*. Seattle, Univ. of Washington Press. 1997. p. 53. After World II, as many as 100,000 Armenians migrated to the truncated Armenian homeland in the USSR from the Middle East as part of a Soviet program aimed at inciting anti-Turkish sentiment among the Armenians of Turkey.
[56] Ann Sheehy and Bohdan Nahaylo. *The Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans and Meshketians: Soviet Treatment of Some National Minorities*. London; Minority Rights Group. 1971. p. 7.
[57] Ronald Wixman. "Manipulating Territory Undermining Rights." *Cultural Survival Quarterly*. Winter 1992. vol. 16. no. 1. pp. 21-24. The small Kurdish population of Azerbaijan was also given an ethnic territory in the Lachin Corridor between Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia with the aim of attracting the sympathy of Kurds in Turkey.
[58] Alexandre Bennigsen. "Sultan Galiev, The USSR and the Colonial Revolution." *The 'Nationality' Question in the Soviet Union*. ed. Gail Lapidus, Garland Publishing Inc. New York. 1992. p. 120.

Workers and Peasants of Turkey, and the *International Association of Workers* and the *Turkish Communist Party* all appeared in the newly established Republic of Turkey during and just after Ataturk's war of liberation. In this period, when the Bolsheviks had real expectations of spreading the Communist revolution to Western Europe and beyond, the granting of autonomous status to the Crimea may have been done, in part, as a showcase for Turkish domestic consumption. By showing the Turks the benefits fellow Turkic Muslims received in the USSR the Soviet regime hoped to contribute to the spread of Communism in Turkey. In addition, Sultan Galiev would have known that approximately one third of the *Turkish Communist Party* consisted of Crimean Tatars.[59]

Neither Sultan Galiev's dream of spreading Communism to the Muslim world nor Veli Ibrahimov's grandiose plan to return Crimean Tatars from the diaspora to the Crimea were, however, destined to be fulfilled. By the late 1920s Vladimir Lenin was dead, the liberal New Economic Policy (NEP) period was ending and the Kremlin had a new leader who (correctly) saw the burgeoning national identities being promoted throughout the USSR via *korenizatsiia* as a centrifugal threat to Soviet authority and to Soviet plans for creating a homogenous Soviet Man. Lenin's successor, Josef Stalin, was to launch a bloody campaign in the late 1920s and early 1930s that would decimate the national Communist cadres of the various republics and smaller territories throughout the USSR and bring a tragic halt to the 'blossoming of nations' in this vast land.

The Fall of Veli Ibrahimov and the 'End' of Korenizatsiia *in the Crimean ASSR*

The catalyst for the fall of Veli Ibrahimov concerned another one of the Crimean party-boss's plans which was later criticized by Stalin as an example of 'bourgeois nationalism', namely his plan to re-Tatarize the Crimean steppe. Prior to this period the majority of Crimean Tatar state and collective farms were in the Crimean mountains and foothills of the south.[60] According to a census of 1926 there were more than 26 villages on the southern coast which had Crimean

[59] Ibid.

[60] Zh. N. Mona. "Kak Byl Realizovan v Krymy Leninskii Dekret o Zemle?" *Krymskaia ASSR (1921-1945)*. Simferopol; Tavrida. 1990. p. 71.

Tatar populations of more than 1,000.[61] The Crimean Tatar population in the largely Russian, Ukrainian and German steppe was small while districts in the south (such as the Yalta district which was 72% Tatar at the end of the 19th century) had a surplus Crimean Tatar population.[62]

Between 1925 and 1927 Ibrahimov had established two dozen villages for 20,000 Crimean Tatar estimated be returning from the Dobruca on the Crimean steppeland that had been largely abandoned by the Nogais during the 1860 emigration. In addition, Ibrahimov planned to move Crimean Tatars from the crowded Yaliboyu and Yaila to settle in the open plains of the northern Crimea in an effort to regain this part of the Crimean homeland for his people. As this plan was being implemented Ibrahimov was informed that Moscow intended to settle several thousand European Jews from Belorussia on the Yaliboyu coast, and even more on the Crimean steppe. According to one estimate, approximately 400,000 Jews were slated to be settled in the Crimea and this would have certainly created a whole new set of ethnic tensions in the peninsula.[63] The local Crimean Tatars, Russians, and Ukrainians were of course quite opposed to these plans to create a Jewish national homeland in the Crimean ASSR.

After being informed of Stalin's plans, Ibrahimov sent a protest to Moscow and subsequently began to set up administrative roadblocks to prevent the mass settlement of Jews in the Crimea (for which he was later branded an 'anti-Semite'). According to a recent account, the "Veli Ibrahimovists" attempted to conceal the amount of empty land available in the Crimean steppe from the central authorities and Ibrahimov established a "a special land fund for Crimean Tatar emigrants from Turkey and those to be resettled from within (the Crimea)."[64] In addition, Veli Ibrahimov began the transfer of as many as 8,000 Crimean Tatar peasants from Karasu Bazar, Bahçesaray and Simferopol-Ak Mecit to the steppe region in an effort to preempt Moscow's plans for the steppe.

[61] A. I. Kliachin. "Dinamika Etnicheskikh Sistem Rasseleniia v Krymy." *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie*. no. 2. March-April. 1992. p. 25.

[62] Hakan Kirimli. *National Movements and National Identity Among the Crimean Tatars*. Leiden; E.J. Brill. 1997. p. 20.

[63] For a description of this project see. Salo Brown. *The Russian Jew Under the Tsars and Soviets*. New York; Macmillan Co. 1964.

[64] Zh. N. Mona. op. cit. no. 60. p. 62.

When news of Ibrahimov's activities reached Moscow the Crimean Tatar leader was accused of supporting Crimean Tatar *kulaks* (wealthy peasants), and *mirzas* (an elite class that had actually been wiped out prior to this time) to which he is reported to have replied "Among the Tatars there are no rich or poor there is but one nation."[65] It soon became apparent to Stalin that Ibrahimov and his indigenous cadre were involved in a program that could best be described as 'nationalist in content and socialist in form'. Ibrahimov's nationalist program and his stand in defense of it could not have come at a worst time. Having recently consolidated power, Josef Stalin was just beginning his state-wide campaign against 'nationalist deviations' (which had begun with a clamp down on Ibrahimov's powerful sponsor Sultan Galiev) and Ibrahimov was arrested and subsequently executed in May of 1928.

Ibrahimov thus had the dubious honor of being one of the first nationalist Communists purged in a nation-wide campaign that would virtually wipe out the native cadres throughout the USSR who had collaborated with the Bolsheviks in the 1920s. It had become obvious to Stalin that the native leaders of the Soviet Union's territorial 'homelands' were now worse than superfluous, their policies of nativization were a threat to the unity of the Soviet state. Having established firm control over the various nationalities via these very native intermediaries, Stalin cynically disposed of this element by the tens of thousands in a bloodletting that was to leave the republics and autonomies of the USSR in stunned submission for decades to come.

In the aftermath of Ibrahimov's execution as many as 3,500 of the newly developed Crimean Tatar leadership and intelligentsia were executed or exiled. Among these were some of the brightest former *Milli Firka* members, Young Tatars and *Jadids* such as Gasprinsky's companion Seyit Abdullah Özenbaşli who was executed. Most tragically the great Crimean Tatar Turcologist, Bekir Çöbanzade was also executed in 1937.[66] This gifted Crimean Tatar scholar's poems

[65] I.S. Chirva, V.P. Volkhov. et. al. *Bor'ba Bol'shevikov za Yprochenie Sovetskoi Vlasti, Vosstanovlenie i Razvitie Narodnogo Khoziaistva Kryma.* Simferopol; Krymizdat. 1958. p. 304.

[66] Çöbanzade's death deprived his nation of one of its brightest scholars. Çöbanzade (whose adopted last name translates to The Shepherd's Son) received his Doctorate in Turcology from the University of Peter Razma in Budapest Hungary in 1919, taught in Lausanne Switzerland, received a chair at the Tauride University in Simferopol in 1922 (during the early stages of *korenizatsiia*) and eventually became a professor of Turcology in Baku Azerbaijan.

of the Crimean homeland may have been too narrowly nationalistic for the times. One poem of interest addressed the perennial problem of Crimean Tatar emigration from the homeland and captures some of Çöbanzade's passion. In a work from 1917, Çöbanzade wrote

> Ah, my neighbors emigrate,
> As they drink their last cup of coffee,
> I would like to be there so I could say 'Stay'!
> So I could say 'There is nothing like your homeland.[67]

Another victim in the purges was Şevki Bektore who, although spared execution, was exiled. Many of these scholars and political leaders had willingly joined the Communist Party to fight against obscurantism within their own society only to be betrayed by the very system they looked to improve their people's lives. The tragic purge of this intelligentsia was a terrible blow to the Crimean Tatar nation and a new class of less educated Crimean Tatars who were less willing to confront Moscow on nationalist issues subsequently made their way into the Crimean ASSR administration.

The purging of the Crimean Tatar intelligentsia was followed shortly thereafter by another tragedy. In the 1930s tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars were deported to Siberia and as part of Stalin's brutal collectivization campaign and this had the effect of turning many segments of Crimean Tatar society against Soviet rule on the eve of World War II. A Russian witness to the deportation of thousands of Crimean Tatars in the 1930s (in many ways a rehearsal for the later mass deportation of 1944) writes:

> Whole villages of Crimean peasants were liquidated. Thousands of people were herded behind the barbed wire of deportation camps. People who had grown up in a mild, southern climate and who had never before left their native mountains and sea coast were transplanted to the taiga and the tundra and began to die off even during the first stages. This was not the application of some sort of mass measures, but the physical destruction, the merciless and senseless destruction of a whole people.[68]

[67] Bekir Çobanzade, from *Ah Tabilsam.* 1917. reprinted in Ismail Otar. *Bekir Sidki Çobanzade. Kirimli Türk Sair ve Bilgini.* Istanbul; Isis. 1999. This translation courtesy of Inci Bowman.

[68] Edige Kirimal. "The Crimean Tatars." *Studies on the Soviet Union.* vol. 10. no. 1. 1970.p. 83.

The 'Rooting' of the Crimean Tatars in the Crimean ASSR

In the aftermath of the purge of the 'Veliibrahmiovists' the executed leader was accused of having contacts with Crimean Tatars from the diaspora with the aim of establishing Turkish influence in the Crimea.[69] In addition, Ibrahimov's plans to Tatarize the Crimean steppe were canceled in part due to the fact that the Soviet authorities felt that the Yaliboyu and Yaila Tatars were unsuited to the conditions of this plain. In this regard the new Crimean ASSR administration, headed once again by a Crimean Tatar Communist, Mehmet Kubay, (a clear indicator that *korenizatsiia* had not completely ended in the Crimea) may have been correct. For its part, the Soviet regime also decided to cancel its plans to settle the Crimean plain with European Jews (in 1934 a Jewish autonomy was created in the Soviet Far East known as Birobidzhan) and it was largely Ukrainians and Russians who settled this steppe in the following decades.

In the years that followed, the situation of the Crimean Tatars deteriorated as many of the aspects of *korenizatsiia* gradually disappeared in the 1930s. There were, for example, the above mentioned purges of Crimean society in which some 30,000-40,000 Crimean *"kulaks"*, intellectuals and party officials were deported, private property was collectivized from 1931-34 causing tremendous hardship and famine etc. but the idea that the Crimean Tatars were the *korennoi narod* in 'their' republic never ceased to be subtly propagated by the Crimean bureaucratic machinery.

While Veli Ibrahimov, who has largely gone unlauded by contemporary Crimean Tatar nationalists, had overseen the final nationalization of his community, his ideas continued to be inadvertently reinforced by subsequent Soviet policies in the 1930s. The Crimean Tatars, for example, were identified in their *propisky*-internal passports by their nationality (there was no 'Soviet' option to match the 'Yugoslav' choice of nationality assumed by many Bosnian Muslims, for example, in Communist Yugoslavia), in school Crimean Tatars learned the history of their narrowly-defined republic-homeland, Crimean Tatars continued to have privileges (albeit in a curtailed form) in the Crimean ASSR based on their unofficial status as the native population of this autonomy, and Crimean Tatar language and identity were promoted here via dance troupes, literature, Tatar language media, etc.

[69] A. K. Bochagov. op. cit. no. 9. p. 85.

Even the most uneducated Crimean Tatar *kolkhoznik* (collective farm worker) living in the most isolated farm in the Yaila hinterland would have been aware of the fact that the Crimean ASSR was his homeland and that the Crimean Tatars were an ethnically-defined people with special prerogatives on this territory. Those who left the borders of this micro-*rodina* effectively lost their special status. By the late 1920s, Yuri Slezkine writes "The administrative units created just a few years before in order to accommodate pre-existing nationalities were now the most important defining feature of those nationalities."[70] Rieks Smeets further points out that "Recent history confirms that the Soviet Union with its specific approach to minorities functioned rather as an incubator of nationalism than as a melting pot for nations."[71]

The Crimean ASSR as it functioned from 1921 to 1944 certainly acted as a promoter and incubator for Crimean Tatar nationalism. While it can be safely argued that the Crimean ASSR was not officially established as a Crimean Tatar autonomy, all the policies of *korenizatsiia* benefited the Crimean Tatars the most and they, as the Crimea's state-sponsored 'rooted people', certainly identified with the Crimea as their official homeland more than the local Russian and Ukrainian population. This was certainly the result of intentional government policy and was carried out in the Crimean ASSR right up until the advent of World War II.

It should also be mentioned that the Crimea's unique geography as an 'island' further facilitated this compact territory's construction as a homeland in the Crimean Tatars' common imagination. The sprawling republic of Kazakhstan or the gerrymandered republic of Uzbekistan (to name just a couple of examples) by contrast were more artificial territorial constructs and less effective as national symbols.

These policies all had the effect of territorializing Crimean Tatar communal identity and administratively and psychologically 'rooting' this people in their state-sponsored territory. Shirin Akiner describes the territorializing effects of Soviet nationality policies as they applied to ethno-national groups in the Soviet Union:

> The histories of the titular national groups were framed as histories of their respective republics, thus emphasizing the symbiotic bond

[70] Yuri Slezkine. op. cit. no. 34. p. 444.

[71] Rieks Smeets. "Circassia." *Central Asian Survey*. Vol. 14. no. 1. Mar. 1995. p. 116.

> between the land and the people. Maps, geography textbooks and photographic albums further strengthened this link, fostering a sense of personal identification with the contours of the republic, and at the same time, marking off this territory from that of other, neighboring republics.[72]

For the most part, the Crimean Tatars of today, who make their claims to the territory of the Crimea in 'Sovietese' (they still use the term *korennoi narod* to legitimize their superior claims to this disputed land), overlook the role of the USSR in completing the forging of their modern national identity and administratively rooting it to its secularly-defined homeland.

Most importantly, Islam as a competing base for communal identity among the Crimean Tatars was destroyed only during the Soviet period.[73] During the subsequent epoch a whole generation of Crimean Tatars was raised in the Soviet Crimea constructing its links to territory on the basis of a uniquely Soviet and secular version of nationalism.

This new territorialized, secular identity of Soviet citizens of Crimean Tatar nationality was not to be established on the religious laws of the Qur'an, or solely on the basis of traditional romantic nationalism of the West, but was primarily based on Marxist-Leninism and the policy of *korenizatsiia*. The process that began with Gasprinsky's attacks on emigration from a larger Turkic homeland came full circle in the 1930s as a whole generation of Crimean Tatars came to see the Crimean ASSR as their people's Socialist *vatan*. A Crimean Tatar who was born in the Tsarist Crimea during the Great Migration of 1861 to the *ak toprak* would have, in a life span, lived to see the complete redefinition of his ethno-religious community's links to its native soil. The Soviet period thus saw the culmination of the development of a territorialized nationalist identity among this people that has retained its communal hold on the Crimean Tatar masses to this day.

The memory of the Crimean ASSR and the Crimean Tatars' unique position in this autonomous republic was to remain with the Crimean Tatars during the long years of exile in the republics of

[72] Shirin Akiner. "Melting Pot, Salad Bowl-Cauldron? Manipulation and Mobilization of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Central Asia." *Ethnic and Racial Studies.* vol. 20. no. 2. p. 377.

[73] It should be recalled that even as late as 1917, the conservative Islamic clergy in the Crimea had been able to martial wide support among the Crimean Tatars for their efforts to overthrow Numan Çelebi Cihan's nationalist movement.

other peoples such as the Uzbeks. One cannot understand the Crimean Tatars' half decade long struggle to return to the Crimea without taking the communal memory of the Crimean ASSR into account. This memory was also to strongly influence the Crimean Tatars' demands for voting quotas and special acknowledgment of their unique status as the Crimea's indigenous population following their return to the Crimea after 1989.[74]

Stalin and the Crimean ASSR

There was, however, a certain arbitrariness associated with this state sponsored, territorial-nation development in the Soviet Union. Ethnic groups, such as the Nogai Tatars of the Kuban and Uighurs who were not granted autonomous ethno-territories, did not develop territoriality in the same way as those that did. Most importantly, those who did receive autonomies were not always guaranteed that this status was permanent, for borders and the ranking of territories fluctuated in the USSR depending on internal and external political exigencies. The Crimean ASSR as a showpiece, for example, certainly lost its value as a 'beacon' to Turkish Communists after Ataturk outlawed the Turkish Communist Party in the newly established Turkish Republic.

In the Soviet federal system, where citizens received state sponsored benefits based on their territorial-national status, the arbitrary demotion of a nation's territorial unit from an SSR to an ASSR, for example, directly impacted the titular nationality. This demotion process could be taken a step further. Put bluntly "if the legitimacy of an ethnic community depended on the government's grant of territory, then the withdrawal of that grant would automatically 'denationalize' that community."[75] Stalin defined a nation as "a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of common language, *territory* (emphasis mine), economic life

[74] Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia write "Memory of this is firmly preserved in the Crimean Tatar ethnic movement and its ideologues have frequently referred to this fact in demanding the restoration of the Crimean ASSR as an 'ethnic Crimean Tatar autonomous formation'." Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia. "The Crimean Tatar Question and the Present Ethnopolitical Situation in the Crimea." *Russian Politics and Law.* vol. 33, no. 6. p. 45.

[75] Yuri Slezkine. op. cit. no. 34. p. 445.

and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."[76] In an ominous clause, however, Stalin qualified this definition by stating that if even one of these characteristics was absent, then "the nation ceases to be a nation."[77]

On May 18, 1944 mechanized divisions of the NKVD (The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the progenitor to the KGB) surrounded the Crimean Tatar villages and suburbs of the Crimea and brutally loaded this entire national group onto cattle trains bound for vast steppe and desert republics of Soviet Central Asia. Overnight the Yaila mountains, the Yaliboyu coast and the remnant of the Crimean steppe still inhabited by Tatars were brutally cleansed of their ancient populations. In one night, half a century of homeland and national identity construction begun by a young idealist who dreamed of modernizing his dying people by means of a humble printing press in Bahçesaray was brutally eradicated. With the loss of their territory, a *sine qua non* for a group to be recognized as a nation according to Stalin's definition of a nation, the Crimean Tatars had quite simply been 'denationalized' and no longer officially existed in the 'Great Friendship of Nations'. No longer a state-sponsored *korennoi narod*, this 'rootless' non-nation was scattered throughout the vast republics of Central Asia and, to a lesser extent, Siberia. Using the vast Orwellian resources at his disposal Stalin had, in perhaps a moment of administrative caprice, wiped out the remnants of the oldest inhabitants of the Black Sea shores and consigned this people to death and assimilation.

Dispersed far from their peninsular homeland on the Black Sea, those Crimean Tatars who survived the horrors of deportation were to begin to rebuild their lives in a strange land populated by Uzbek oasis dwellers, Kazakh shepherds, and Tajik farmers. The level of cultural development in this backward Soviet hinterland made up of the dry expanses of the Kizil Kum desert, the wide steppes of Kazakhstan and the unforgiving mountains of Tajikistan was far below that found in the Europeanized Crimean Peninsula. The Crimean Tatars' new homes were to be found in primitive mud huts, barracks and dug-outs surrounding the simple *kişlaks* (villages) and factory towns of Central Asia. The stunned survivors of 'The *Deportatsiia'* were to have to adapt to life as low-paid factory workers, coal

[76] Bruce Franklin. *The Essential Stalin; Major Theoretical Writings, 1905-52*. London; Croom Helm. 1973. p. 60.
[77] Robert Kaiser. op. cit. no. 49. p. 8.

miners, day laborers and menial workers in cities and villages scattered, for the most part, throughout eastern Uzbekistan. Towns like the dreary industrial village of Circik at the foot of the brown Chaktal mountains, the poor village of Yangi Yul in the suburbs of the Uzbekistan SSR's capital Tashkent, the ancient caravan city of Samarkand (which was gradually being enveloped by factories) plus a variety of towns previously unknown to the Crimean Tatars, such as Margilan, Namengan Fergana, Andijan, Argen and Gulistan were to be the homes of the Crimean Tatars.

The devastated Crimean Tatar community was to spend half a century in this land during the *ikinci sürgün* (second exile). One cannot understand the contemporary, post-Soviet identity of the Crimean Tatars and their struggle to reclaim their rights without first comprehending the ways in which this traumatic event determined and shaped the Crimean Tatars' entire understanding of themselves and their homeland since 1944.

CHAPTER TWELVE

SÜRGÜN. THE CRIMEAN TATAR EXILE IN CENTRAL ASIA

The defining event in 20th century Crimean Tatar history is the brutal deportation and exile of this entire people from their homeland to Central Asia in the closing days of World War II. More than any other event, the removal of this small nation from a land it had come to define as its *natsional'naia rodina* (national homeland) under the first two decades of Soviet rule has shaped this people's contemporary national identity. For several generations the Crimean Tatar people worked in the factories, mines and industrial centers of a Central Asian landscape that was in many ways different from their peninsular homeland on the Black Sea. This experience of deportation and living in the Central Asia during the *ikinci sürgün* (second exile) continues to shape the modern Crimean Tatars' language, customs, labor skills, gender relations, political activities and views of themselves and their community.

No chapter in Crimean Tatar history is as hotly contested as the events which led up to the Crimean Tatar mass deportation. Soviet accounts from the late 1940s are clear in their indictment of the Crimean Tatar people as a nation of traitors to Soviet *rodina* and leave no room for doubt concerning the reasons for the deportation. After the deportation of the Crimean Tatars (along with several other small Soviet nations, including the Chechens and Ingush) an article appeared in the Soviet newspaper *Izvestiia* which announced:

> During the Great Patriotic War when the people of the USSR were heroically defending the honor and independence of the Fatherland in the struggle against the German-Fascist invaders, many Chechens and Crimean Tatars, at the instigation of German agents joined volunteer units organized by the Germans and together with German troops engaged in armed struggle against units of the Red Army... meanwhile the main mass of the population of the Chechen Ingush and Crimean ASSRs took no counteraction against these betrayers of the Fatherland.[1]

[1] "Ob Utverzhdenii Ukazov Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta RSFSR." *Izvestiia.* June 26, 1942. p. 2.

The opinion that the Crimean Tatars had betrayed the Soviet homeland during World War II was widespread throughout the Soviet period and has not died to this day. While visiting a memorial to the deportation recently built by the Crimean Tatar returnees in the center of Simferopol, Crimea, a Crimean Tatar Red Army veteran pointed out to me the recently painted swastikas and anti-Tatar graffiti on this modest edifice to his people's suffering. Crimean Tatar cemeteries in the Crimea are also routinely defaced with Nazi graffiti. Long after the Soviet Union has ended and World War II has been largely forgotten by most of Europe, the Crimean Tatars of the 21st century continue to be saddled with the stigma of *izmeniky rodiny* (traitors to the homeland) by their detractors.

Not surprisingly, Crimean Tatar nationalists refute Soviet claims that their people betrayed the USSR during World War II. The Crimean Tatars see in the deportation a more sinister plot to complete the process of creating a 'Crimea without Crimean Tatars' that began with the 'expulsion' of their ancestors in the great migrations of the 18th and 19th centuries. The Crimean Tatar nationalist leader Edige Kirimal, who was vitally involved in events in the Crimea during World War II (as a self-proclaimed Crimean Turk), claimed:

> Soviet propaganda tries to justify before world opinion the liquidation of the autonomous Crimean Republic and the deportation of the Turkish population from the peninsula by qualifying this measure as a punishment deserved for 'universal betrayal of the Soviet government.' Nevertheless, vast evidence proves that the charge of 'universal betrayal' only served as a pretext for carrying out a long-prepared plan devised by Moscow to clear the peninsula completely of the Turkish population...In view of the foregoing, we are bound to state that the deportation of the whole Turkish population from the Crimea was actually the final step in the extermination of the Crimean Turks by Moscow, started in 1921/22 by deliberately provoked famine and by various measures for that purpose during the period between 1928 and 1941. The real cause of this crime, unheard of in history, was the Russian wish to transform the peninsula into a stronghold and one of the strategic bases for the aggressive aims of Soviet Russia.[2]

In light of such diametrically opposed interpretations of war-time events in the Crimea, a brief analysis of the Crimean Tatars' role during the Nazi invasion of the USSR during World War II is a

[2] Edige Kirimal. "The Tragedy of Crimea." *Eastern Quarterly.* vol. 4. no. 1. 1951. pp. 45-46.

prerequisite for understanding the causes for the traumatic forced removal of this people from their homeland and their continued stigmatization to this day.

Crimean Tatar Activities During the German Invasion of the Crimean ASSR

The German *blitzkrieg* on the Soviet Union's western marches which aimed to exterminate Communism and topple the world's first 'workers' state' caught Soviet leader, Josef Stalin by complete surprise. Hitler's fast moving *Panzer* divisions and *Luftwaffe* appear to have rolled back the poorly led Red Army divisions with ease in the early summer of 1941. Throughout that summer the Red Army desperately mobilized millions of Soviet citizens from all nationalities to halt the progress of the seemingly invincible Nazi *Wehrmacht*. In this fashion, Soviet sources claim that approximately 20,000 able bodied Crimean Tatars were mobilized (from a total national population at that time consisting of approximately 218,000 i.e. almost 10% of the total Crimean Tatar population) and sent to the front against the Nazis.[3] In the initial days of the war Soviet losses were exceptionally high and, as the Nazi army cut through Belorussia and the Ukraine towards the Crimean Peninsula, entire Soviet armies were encircled by the fast moving German forces and captured. The defeat of the Red Army has been described as a "great round up" and on two occasions Soviet armies with as many as 600,000 men in them were surrounded and captured.[4] Soviet sources point out that "Many of these (20,000) Crimean Tatars gave their lives in the struggle against the Hitlerite invaders on both Crimean soil and on other fronts."[5]

On October 21, 1941 the German 11th army broke through the superior Soviet defenses at the narrow Perekop isthmus linking the Crimea to the mainland and forced their way into the peninsula. The Soviet 55th army retreated in headlong flight towards the fortress

[3] Nikolai Fedorovich Bugai. *Iosif Stalin-Lavrentiiu Berii: "Ikh Nado Deportirovat'. Dokumenty, Fakty, Kommentarii.* Moscow; Druzhba Narodov. 1992. p. 131.

[4] B.H. Liddell Hart. *History of the Second World War.* New York; Putnam and Sons. 1970. p. 168.

[5] B. Broshevan and P. Tygliiants *Izganie i Vozvrashchenie.* Simferopol; Tavrida. 1994. p. 34.

city of Sevastopol in the south-west and towards Kerch in the south-east. According to German accounts, thousands of Soviet prisoners of war fell into Nazi hands during the Soviet retreat across the Crimean steppe.[6] As the Red Army evacuated Kerch and dug in for a heroic defense at Sevastopol, the Romanian Mountain Corps (the Romanians were German allies in the war) and the German 11th army occupied the bulk of the Crimean Peninsula.

According to Necip Adulhamitoglu, thousands of Crimean Tatars serving in the Red Army were captured by the Germans at this time as whole Russian armies (most notably General Vlasov's army) surrendered to the seemingly invincible Nazi forces.[7] Many of those captured Crimean Tatars at this time were taken to prisoner of war camps where the mortality rate was exceptionally high.[8]

Although the Nazis had initially called for the murder of all 'Asiatic inferiors' (Hitler considered "Mongols" and Tatars to be *Untermenschen*-subhumans who were even lower on the race scale than the despised Slavs), in addition to that of the Jews and Communists, Hitler's generals in the field began to revise this hasty policy when the Red Army began to put up a more determined resistance before Moscow, Stalingrad and Leningrad.[9] In a sharp reversal of Hitler's genocidal racial policies, the pragmatic German high command 'realists' began recruiting from among the Soviet prisoners in 1942. In this fashion the German army created several distinct support armies from the groups of Soviet prisoners of war.

As news of the captured Crimean Tatars' fate reached members of the Crimean diaspora in Turkey (Turkey was technically neutral at this time but was being courted by Germany as an ally) leaders of this community used Turkey's history of good relationships with

[6] Friedrich Schulz. *The Battle for Crimea. Attack on Sevastopol.* (translated from German War Report). Historical Division, HQ, US Army, Europe. 1954. p. 9.

[7] Necip Abdulhamitoglu. *Türksüz Kırım. Yuz Binlerin Sürgün.* Istanbul; Bogazici Yayinlari. 1974. p. 57.

[8] Alexander Alexiev and Enders Wimbush describe the Nazis' treatment of captured Soviet Turkic Muslims as follows: "Nazi racial prejudices exacted a heavy toll among the Turkic and Caucasian nationalities during the first few months of the war. Soviet Muslims suffered more than most. Tens of thousands of them who had deserted or had been taken prisoner were shot summarily, many on the assumption that they were Jewish because of circumcision. About 100,000 Turkestanis (Central Asians) were documented as being present in POW camps in the fall of 1941; only 6,000 survived the winter." Alexander Alexiev and S. Enders Wimbush. *Ethnic Minorities in the Red Army. Asset or Liablity?* Boulder Colorado; Westview Press. 1988. p. 113.

[9] Ibid. p. 73.

the Germans to arrange a visit to members of their nationality in prison camps in Poland and the Crimea. A message sent from Turkey to Germany at this time (and discovered in Berlin in the final days of the war by the Soviets) introduced the Dobrucan Tatar nationalist Müstecip Fazil Ülküsal and his companion Edige Kirimal to the German high command and announced that:

> Two men-the lawyer Müstecip Fazil and Edige Kirimal-will be arriving to you. They have a project to offer the Germans that will be of help in the Crimea and, at the same time, it will be beneficial to the Crimean Turks...Both of these men are completely trustworthy people. I request that you send them to the Crimea and use them there in German-Turkish interests.[10]

These two "Crimean Turk" nationalist leaders succeeded in obtaining the release of their countrymen from the German prisoner of war camps and enrolled them in an independent Crimean support legion for the *Wehrmacht*. According to Crimean Tatar, Soviet and German sources, this legion eventually consisted of eight battalions with a total of 20,000 soldiers.[11] A historian who has analyzed war-time collaboration between Soviet citizens in POW camps and the Nazis claimed that at this time "The captors simply handed out German uniforms and only the foolhardy refused."[12] Kirimal supports this claim and states "Officially they were volunteers, but they had almost no other choice because the majority were recruited from among prisoners of war facing starvation or death from disease in German camps in Simferopol and Nikolayev."[13]

Many of the Crimean Tatar 'collaborators' were utilized in the Crimea by the German army which favored this nationality over the Slavs in the peninsula. As in other areas occupied by the *Wehrmacht*, where local non-Slavic populations had suffered from the horrors of collectivization, de-kulakization, purges and other excesses of Stalinism, many Crimean Tatars initially saw the Germans as liberators and remembered their positive treatment at Germans' hands during World War I. In light of this feeling, Crimean Tatar nationalists from the Crimea and the Turkish and Romanian diasporas convinced the Nazi government to allow the formation of Muslim committees in the Crimea that would allow the Crimean Tatars some form of autonomy. According to Alexander Nekrich "The establishment of the Muslim committees gave a boost not so much to collaboration with the occupation forces as to Tatar nationalism. Just as the Nazis wished to use the Tatar nationalists for their purposes, the nationalists in turn hoped to utilize the situation to advance their own purely Tatar interests, as they saw them."[14]

The formation of Muslim Committees in the Crimea headed by a Crimean Tatar nationalist who had fled to Turkey at the end of World War I, Ahmed Ozenbaşli, led to rising tensions between the Russian population and the Crimean Tatars seeking autonomy. As the Crimean Tatars were formed into *Schutzmannschaftsbataillonen* (police battalions) or *Selbshutze* (self defense) brigades, often headed by exiled Crimean Tatars from Turkey, they were used by the German army to protect Tatar villages from partisan attacks and on occasion to track down Soviet partisans in the Yaila mountains. For the most part, however, the village defense units acted only to defend their villages from the partisans and rarely engaged in offensive operations against them. While the Nazis may have had high expectations for the village defense units, these Tatar units usually sided with whoever was strongest in the area and could not be automatically counted on by either the Germans or the partisans. The prime concern of the Tatar village defense units appears to have been preventing partisans and German units from attacking Crimean Tatar villages.[15]

Many Russian partisans in the Crimea began raiding Crimean Tatar villages at this time in reprisal for the perceived collaboration of Crimean Tatars in certain districts and a deep cleavage was formed between the local Russian and Crimean Tatar populations of the Crimea. Russian partisan commanders were known to shoot Crimean

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[10] N. F. Bugai. op. cit no. 3. p. 133.

[11] Edige Kirimal. *Der National Kampf der Krimturken*. Emsdetten; Verlag Lechte. 1952. p. 32. and Joachim Hoffman. *Die Ostlegion 1941-1943. Turkotataren, Kaukasier und Wolgafinnen im deutschen Heer*. Freiburg; Verlag Rombach. 1976. pp. 39-50. B. Broshevan and P. Tygliants. op. cit. no. 5. p. 34.

[12] Mark Elliot. "Soviet Military Collaborators During World War II." *Ukraine During World War II. History and Its Aftermath*. Edmonton; Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies. 1986. p. 92.

[13] Edige Kirimal. "The Crimean Tatars." *Studies on the Soviet Union*. vol. 10. no.1. 1970. p. 93.

[14] Alexander Nekrich. *The Punished Peoples. The Deportation and Fate of Soviet Minorities at the end of the Second World War*. New York; W.W. Norton and Co. 1978. p. 21. Nekrich was first Soviet historian to smuggle a work out of the USSR dealing with the deportation of Soviet ethnic groups during World War II.

[15] Edige Kirimal. op. cit. no. 11. p. 305. For an analysis of German views on the Crimean Tatars during the occupation see. M. Luther. *Die Krim unter Deutscher Bezatzung im Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Berlin. 1956.

Tatars who attempted to join their bands and messages were repeatedly sent to Moscow from Russian partisan leaders in the Crimea referring to the Crimean Tatars' 'treachery'.[16]

There was not, however, any more unity among the Crimean Tatar community at this time than there was among the Slavic population and it should be mentioned that, after the Russians, the largest number of local guerrillas fighting among the Soviet partisans in the Crimea were actually Crimean Tatars not the more numerous Ukrainians. In 1944 approximately one fifth of the partisans in the Crimea were Crimean Tatars.[17] Several Crimean Tatar partisan commanders earned fame for their activities and the following account is typical of this group's activities:

> The Commissar of the Eastern formation was named captain Refat Mustafaev (prior to the war he was secretary of the Crimean regional party). Here is one episode of the military actions of his formation. At the end of the 1943 the divisions of the second and third brigades destroyed the fascist garrison in Stary Krym (Eski Kirim) destroying on that occasion two tanks and 16 vehicles with gasoline and ammunition. The partisans occupied the building of the commander of the city police and threw grenades into the restaurant where the Hitlerites banqueted. One of the group seized the Gestapo jail and freed 46 Soviet patriots.[18]

As the war progressed, more and more Crimean Tatars actually joined the underground to attack German units that had begun seizing crops and supplies from the local population. The Tatar-inhabited Yaila mountains, with their multitude of karstic caves for hiding weapons and winding roads for staging ambushes, were a prime region for launching guerrilla attacks against the Nazi occupying force. As the Crimean Tatars joined the partisans it is not surprising that their villages suffered heavily from German reprisals. The following account is typical:

> Dozens of Crimean Tatars were shot in Alushta on the banks of the Demerci, in the foothills of the Kastel, in dozens in the villages of Ulu-Sala, Kizil Taş, Degirmen Köy, Tav-Bodrak, Saly and many others. In July 1988 the country learned from information from Tass that in the partisan regions in the mountainous part of the Crimea all villages were burnt and a 'dead zone' was created. Yes it actually happened. More than 70 villages were destroyed. In them dwelt more than 25% of the Tatar population of the Crimea. In these villages, in remote woodlands, in the mountains lived only Tatars.[19]

[16] Alan Fisher. *The Crimean Tatars*. Stanford; Hoover Institution Press. 1978. p. 159.

[17] B. Broshevan and P. Tygliiants. op. cit. no 5. p. 19.

[18] Ibid. p. 36.

Most importantly, the German occupation regime lost all Crimean Tatar support when it forcefully shipped thousands of Crimean Tatars west to Germany to work as *Ostarbeiters* ('Eastern Workers') in the plants and factories of the Third Reich. Like tens of thousands of other forced laborers conscripted to work in German industry, healthy Crimean Tatars were rounded up by the Crimean *Gestapo* and transshipped to Germany which was described as a "vast slave workshop" in the last years of World War II.[20] At war's end Crimean Tatars were scattered throughout Germany with 2,000 being located at a camp in Mittenwald and others in Augsburg and Neu-Ulm. Many of these forced laborers could not return to the Soviet Union where they faced death or imprisonment as 'collaborators' and many were given the choice of migrating to the USA or Turkey or staying in Germany after the war.[21]

The death toll in the Nazi factories was high and, to this very day, the Crimean Tatar leadership in the American diaspora, headed by Fikret Yurter in New York, is working to receive compensation from the German government for this brutal policy.[22] In a letter sent to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadoka Ogata in November of 1998, Fikret Yurter stated his people's claim for recompense from the German government claiming:

> As a start we feel that the German Republic has a very real moral and financial obligation to the Crimean Tatars. During the German-Nazi occupation of Crimea in World War II, more than 115 Crimean Tatar villages were burned to the ground and thousands of Crimean Tatars unjustly killed by Nazis. More than 15,000 Crimean Tatars

[19] Svetlana Alieva. *Tak Eto Bylo. Natsional'noe Repressi v SSSR*. vol. 3. Moscow; Pisan. 1993. p. 99.

[20] Gerald Reitlinger. *The House Built on Sand. The Conflicts of German Policy in Russia 1939-45*. London; Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1960. pp. 185-186, and p. 304 for description of the abysmal working conditions of *Ostarbeiters*.

[21] Most Crimean Tatars in Germany emigrated at this time but small communities remained in Germany and there is today a Crimean Tatar organization in Germany known as the *Almanya'daki Kirim Tatar Cemiyeti-Landsmannschaft der Krimtataren in Deutschland* (The Organization of Crimean Tatars in Germany).

[22] In a recent acknowledgment of this humanitarian crime, Fikret Yurter informed the author that the German government has, as of 1999, begun to pay pensions to the few surviving Crimean Tatar *Ostarbeiters* of the former Soviet Union in compensation for their forced utilization in German industry during the war.

were taken to Germany and Austria for forced labor (so called *'Ostarbeiters'*) and to concentration camps where most of them perished.[23]

Soviet documents corroborate Yurter's claim and show that tens of thousands of Soviet citizens were indeed forcefully taken from the Crimea by the Nazis during the German occupation of the Soviet Union.[24]

The Decision to Deport the Crimean Tatars

As the tide of war turned following the Nazi defeats at Stalingrad, Leningrad and Moscow, a large German army was trapped by the advancing Red Army in the Crimean Peninsula.[25] This force was destroyed only after a bloody battle at Sevastopol in which thousands of Red Army soldiers lost their lives. After experiencing such horrific losses at Sevastopol, the victorious Soviet army was known to be in an unforgiving mood. The Crimean Tatars, as a nation of 'collaborators', were quickly targeted for reprisals by the Red Army in the Crimea.

This was in spite of the fact that the majority of Crimean Tatar *hiwis* (German lit. 'helpers'), their families, and all those associated with Edige Kirimal's Muslim Committees had been evacuated from the Crimea by the retreating *Wehrmacht* and Romanian army to Germany and Hungary (where they joined the Eastern Turkic Division) or the Dobruca. Soviet sources claim that 20,000 Crimean Tatars were evacuated with the retreating Nazi army in 1944 (this was perforce a rough estimate) and this corresponds with the number of those estimated to have been involved in collaborationist activities.[26] It should also be stated that many Soviet officials recognized that the guilty segments of the Crimean Tatar population had retreated with the Germans and rejected claims that the Crimean Tatars had betrayed the Soviet Union *en masse*. The Soviet following report is typical of this more informed attitude:

[23] Letter from Fikret Yurter to Sadoka Ogata UNHCR provided for author by the National Center of Crimean Tatars.
[24] N.F. Bugai. op. cit. no. 3. p. 131.
[25] While many officers in the German High Command recommended evacuating the Crimea, Hitler overrode them and appears to have been obsessed with defending the untenable Crimean Peninsula, which he referred to as *Gottenland* (Goth Land), at any cost.
[26] N.F. Bugai. op. cit. no. 3. p. 131.

> The secretary of the Crimean *obkom* (district committee) of BKP (Communist Party), V. S. Bultaov, pointed out that the main mass of Tatars remained loyal to the Soviet authorities and after the arrival of the occupiers they supported the partisans, whole villages offered support to the partisans, and many of these were burnt by the Germans for supporting the partisans.[27]

With the retreat of the German army, however, these voices were increasingly drowned out by those calling for the punishment of the Crimean Tatars. None doubted that Stalin would seek to punish those segments of the population deemed guilty of betraying the Soviet Motherland but few could guess at the sheer randomness, brutality and all encompassing nature of Stalin's subsequent punitive actions.

As the war drew to an end it became obvious that many nations in the Soviet Union had provided collaborators for the Nazi army, most notably the Russians and Ukrainians. Even the Karaims, a small Jewish group in the Crimea, joined SS units during the war (the fact that a Jewish group served in the SS would obviously indicate that there was duress used in recruiting Soviet citizens into the German war machine!).[28] The existence of Muslim Committees in the Crimea organized from Berlin by Edige Kirimal and other members of the Turkish and Dobrucan diaspora, however, appeared to be particularly damning in the Soviet government's eyes.

Nekrich furthermore claims "It was Kirimal, together with other émigrés who went to Germany and then to fascist-occupied Crimea, who put the term 'Crimean Turks' into circulation, a term that did much harm to the Crimean Tatars in the fateful year of 1944."[29] Edige Kirimal explains his use of this term that was to have negative connotations in light of Russia's long history of distrust of the Turks as follows "Most orientalists regard the name Crimean Turks as more accurate than the commonly used term Crimean Tatars, the people concerned being Turkic in origin, language, and culture."[30]

German documents captured by the Red Army reveal that the

[27] N. F. Bugai. "K Voprosy o Deportatsii Narodov SSSR v 30-40-x godax" *Istoriia SSSR.* no. 6. 1989. Nov-Dec. 1989. p. 137.
[28] Shmuel Spector. *Encylopedia of the Holocaust.* vol. 2. New York; Macmillian Publishing Co. 1996. p. 786.
[29] Nekrich. op. cit. no. 14. p. 19.
[30] Edige Kirimal. "Complete Destruction of National Groups as Groups. The Crimean Turks." *Genocide in the USSR.* New York; Scarecrow Press. 1959. pp. 20-21.

Germans were aware of the fact that Turkey had "many emigrants who had not lost their ties to the Crimea" and were hatching plans to use this diaspora and the Tatar community of the Crimea to establish ties with the Turkish government.[31] When these documents fell into Soviet hands following the German retreat, the nationalist agenda of Ulküsal, Kirimal, and other Crimean Tatar nationalists from both the Crimea and the diaspora may have inadvertently cast further suspicion on the Crimean Tatars.

By linking the Crimean Tatars not only to Germany but to Turkey, the "Crimean Turk" nationalists placed further suspicion on their people at a most unfortunate conjuncture. It appears that, with the retreat of the Nazis, Stalin contemplated an invasion of Turkey and any people seen as a fifth column with ties to Germany *and* Turkey was doubly suspect.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that a pall of suspicion fell on the Crimean Tatars despite the fact that thousands of this nationality were still serving in the Red Army as it stormed towards Berlin. A Crimean Tatar witness from Bahçesaray writes:

> People were happy that the Germans had been expelled, that all would be as it had been, that the war would soon end, that those on the front would return, that life would soon be put in order. But nevertheless, a sensation of disquiet crept into our hearts. At the entrance to the Khan's Palace-Museum, before a large crowd of villagers they led a group of Crimean Tatars. As they explained to all who were gathered...They were betrayers of the people.[32]

Thousands of Crimean Tatars were subsequently arrested as the Red Army regained the Crimean countryside and, according to Kirimal "in Simferopol the trees lining the streets were used as gallows, so great was the number of executions."[33] On May 10, 1944 the NKVD (the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, predecessor to the KGB) chief, Lavrenti Beria, sent one of many secret letters to Josef Stalin which was discovered in KGB archives and published only with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In it Commissar Beria writes:

> Considering the traitorous activities of the Crimean Tatars against the Soviet people and as a result of the undesirability of the further in-

[31] N.F. Bugai. op. cit. no. 3. pp. 149-150.
[32] Nurie Bilazova. "Pamiati Zhertv Genotsida Posviashchaetssia." *Golos Kryma.* May, 17, 1996. p. 5.
[33] Edige Kirimal. op. cit. no. 13. p. 89.

> habitation of the Crimean Tatars on the borders of the Soviet Union, the NKVD of the USSR brings to your attention a project decided upon by the State Committee of Defense on the resettlement of all Tatars from the territory of the Crimea.
>
> We consider it useful to settle the Crimean Tatars in the category of special-settlers *(spetsposelenets)* in the districts of the Uzbek SSR for the utilization in work such as village labor, on *kolkhozes* (collective farms) and *sovkhozes* (state farms) and in industry and transport. The question on the resettlement of the Tatars in the Uzbek SSR has the agreement of the secretary of the CP (Communist Party) of Uzbekistan, comrade Iusupov.[34]

With this telegram the Crimean Tatars' fate was sealed, but there is some controversy over the real motives for deporting this small remaining nation of less than 200,000 when as many as 20,000 soldiers from this people actually fought *for* the USSR during the war. The real reason for the deportation, as previously noted, probably laid in Stalin's plans to invade Turkey at this time. In particular, as the Red Army moved into a collapsing Germany and Eastern Europe, Stalin contemplated the annexation of the Turkish *vilayets* (provinces) of Kars and Ardahan on Turkey's north-eastern border with the USSR.[35] At that time the Soviets commenced a broad propaganda campaign designed to lead to an Armenian uprising in this region of Turkey.[36]

As Stalin prepared for this operation he, as a Georgian, must have been keenly aware of the existence of several Muslim, traditionally pro-Turkish, ethnic groups located on the invasion route through the Caucasus. Most importantly small distrusted ethnic groups, such as the Karachai, Balkars, Chechens, Ingush and the Meshketian Turks, occupied the two main highways running to Turkey (the Georgian military highway and the coastal highway) or were settled on the Turkish frontier itself. In addition, the "Crimean Turks" occupied the USSR's main naval bastion facing Turkey across the Black Sea.

As preparations for a confrontation with Turkey were made in

[34] The NKVD had acquired operational control over forced resettlement projects by 1939. N.F. Bunegin. op. cit. no. 3. p. 134.
[35] These provinces had been gained by Russia with the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 and were lost to Russia during World War I.
[36] An alarmed Turkey in return planned a full mobilization. Galia Golan. *Soviet Policies in the Middle East from World War Two to Gorbachev.* Cambridge; Cambridge University Press. 1990. p. 32. George Harris. "The Soviet Union and Turkey." *The Soviet Union and the Middle East. The Post-World War II Era.* Stanford; Stanford Univ. Press. 1974. p. 27.

the USSR, all these suspect Muslim groups had blanket charges of treason leveled against them except for the Meshketian Turks (also known as Ahiska), who were never officially charged with any crime. The mountainous homeland of this small conglomerate ethnic group, made up of Turkic Karapapakhs, Muslim Armenians (Khemshils), Turkicized Kurds and the Meshketian Turks proper, located far to the south, on the Turkish border in the Georgian SSR, had never been close to the scene of combat with the Nazi invaders, yet they too were deported *in toto*. The fact that this innocent ethnic was chosen for group deportation lends the strongest credence to the claim that the deportation of the Crimean and Caucasian peoples had more to do with Soviet foreign policy exigencies than any real crimes of 'universal mass treason' committed by these groups.[37]

The Deportation

As early as 1943 Stalin had already launched a series of surprise operations which aimed to do nothing less than eradicate several *entire* national groups, men, women and children, that were arbitrarily deemed to have been guilty of mass collaboration with the enemy. While the targeted nationalities have argued endlessly since this time about the injustice of punishing whole nations, including innocent, un-armed civilians, for treason (especially when several of these ethnic groups had more soldiers fighting in the Red Army than with the invaders), the charges of mass national treason were in all probability simply a pretext for ethnically cleansing (Stalin actually used the term *ochistit'*, 'to cleanse' in his orders) the Soviet Union's borderlands of non-Slavic, predominantly Islamic, populations.[38]

Regardless of the motives, the results were to be a terrifying example of a totalitarian regime's capacity to use its tremendous resources to engage in total cleansing with a speed and all encompassing nature seen only in the Third Reich.[39] In the first move of what

[37] As Mehmet Tütüncü surmised "The only thing all of these peoples have in common is religion and that they inhabit areas that would be sensitive in an invasion of Turkey. And this seems the only reason for the collective punishment of all these people." Mehmet Tütüncü. "Why the Crimean Tatars Were Deported." *Bitiğ*. December 1992. Year 2, no. 5. p. 16.

[38] N. F. Bugai op. cit. no. 3. p. 129 and 144.

[39] Stalin had first experimented with communal deportation of whole communities during the 1930s when he exiled almost 200,000 Koreans of the Soviet Far East to Central Asia. Henry Huttenbach. "The Soviet Koreans." *Central Asian Survey*. vol. 12. no. 1. 1993. p. 66.

Soviet historian Alexander Nekrich has called 'Operation Deportation,' Josef Stalin deported the Volga German population from its republic to the steppes of Kazakhstan in 1941.[40] Following the German retreat, the NKVD then commenced a 'cleaning up' of the Soviet southern borders that began in November of 1943 with the deportation of a small Muslim people from the northern Caucasus mountains, the Karachais. This was followed by the punitive deportation of the Buddhist Mongol Kalmyks in December 1943, the Chechens and related Muslim mountaineers, the Ingush, in February 1944, the Muslim Balkars later in 1944 and in May of 1944 the Crimean Tatars' came to know the horror of the sanitized term *deportatsiia*.

On the night of May 18, 1944, less than a week after the bloody Nazi retreat from the Crimea, the *Kara Gün* (Dark Day) commemorated by Crimean Tatars throughout the Central Asian, Balkan and Turkish diasporas commenced in the Crimea. NKVD mechanized infantry units surrounded all the Crimean Tatar villages and suburbs in the Crimea and herded the startled inhabitants to several designated trans-shipment points. The traumatized Tatars were given less than an hour to gather a few belongings and then they were transported at gun point (on American lend lease Studebakers from Iran) to major rail hubs in the Crimea. Crimean Tatar survivors of the deportation claim that many people assumed they were to be executed *en masse* in much the same way the Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing units) had murdered the Crimea's Jewish population during the occupation.[41] Reshat Dzhemilev writes "The cruel treatment by armed soldiers convinced the Crimean Tatars that they were being taken out to be shot at the anti-tank ditches just as the fascists had shot all the Jews. Some of the Tatars even began bidding each other farewell."[42] Russian author Alexander Solzhenitsyn provides a vivid description of the deportation process as it occurred in the Crimea with his characteristic bitter irony:

[40] This move was explained as a preemptive measure designed to prevent collaboration between Soviet Germans and the invading Nazis. Alexander Nekrich. op. cit. no. 14. p. 19.

[41] From 1941 to 1942 the Germans executed 91,678 people in the Crimea, mainly Jews, Gypsies and Communists.

[42] Reshat Dzhemilev. *Musa Mahmut, Human Torch*. New York; Crimea Foundation. 1986. p. 20.

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> The whole Crimean Peninsula (newly liberated in April, 1944) echoed with the hum of engines, and hundreds of motorized columns crawled snakelike, on and on along roads straight and crooked. The trees were just in full bloom. Tatar women were lugging boxes of spring onions from hothouses to bed them out in the gardens. The tobacco planting was just beginning. And that's where it ended. Tobacco vanished from the Crimea for many years to come. The motorized columns did not go right up to the settlements, but stayed at the road junctions while detachments of special troops encircled villages. Their orders were to allow the inhabitants an hour and a half to get ready, but political officers cut this down, sometimes to as little as forty minutes, to get it over with more quickly and be on time at the assembly point—and so that richer pickings would be lying around for the detachment of the task force left behind in the village. Hardened villages like Ozenbash, near Lake Biyuk, had to be burned to the ground. The motorized columns took the Tatars to the stations, and there they went on waiting in their trains for days on end, wailing and singing mournful songs of farewell.[43]

In a manner that was indeed reminiscent of Hitler's treatment of the Jews, 11,000 able bodied Crimean Tatar men were forcefully separated from their families at the train stations and herded on to cattle cars for utilization in coal mines in the vicinity of Moscow and Tula.[44] The Crimean Tatar men who found themselves in the forced labor brigades were not released until 1947-48.

The women, children, elderly and large number of Tatar war invalids were packed onto sealed and guarded cars which made their way thousands of kilometers east in the following two weeks. Interviewees who survived the deportation reported that the only modification to the train carts for humans was the introduction of a pipe which served as a latrine in the corner of some carts. Many of the wagons, described by the deportees as freight *(tovarny)* or cattle *(tel'icah'ie)* cars, still bore blood and feces left behind by those who were earlier deported from the Caucasus.

In his account of the war, the Crimean Tatar writer Cengiz Dagci provides the following account of the return of young Crimean Tatar partisan fighter to his home village in the south Crimean mountains. He arrived to find that his village had just been deported leaving only his friend Alim behind.

[43] Alexander Solzhenitsyn. *Gulag Archipelgo* .vol. 5-7. New York; Harper and Row Publishers. 1976. p. 389.

[44] B. Broshevan and P. Tygliiants. op. cit. no. 5. p. 46.

> "Tell me Alim, what's happened in Chukurdja?"
>
> Alim stared at him in silence like a dumb man.
>
> "Who is here in Chukurdja Alim?"
>
> Alim shrugged "Nobody."
>
> What about Bilal Agha?"
>
> Alim turned his eyes on the ground and began to speak in an anguished voice. "Two days ago the Russians came to the village. They hanged Grandpa Djavit and Kaytaz on the tree by the mosque. They shot fifteen people including Hassan Agha, lining them up against the mosque wall. They killed some others too, but this I didn't see. Then they gathered the people in the village square. I stood near Bilal Agha. He whispered in my ear "You run away Alim. Run away to the mountains, look for Selim, find him and tell him what you've seen. Tell him to stay in the hills. You too stay there, don't come back to the village. Because the village isn't ours now."[45]

Survivors of the deportation remember the terrible weeks spent in the sweltering, guarded train wagons with a special horror. The deportees who were already numbed by the destruction wreaked on their villages by Nazi soldiers and Soviet partisan units during the war speak of whole wagons arriving at their destination with their occupants dead. A Tatar deportee described the mortality rate as follows:

> The doors of the wagons were usually opened in stations where the train stopped for a few minutes. The panting people gulped fresh air, and they gave way to the sick who were unable to crawl to the exit to breath it. But along the length of the wagon one officer in a blue hat hastily strolled with soldiers and, glancing into the wagon, asked the same question. "Any bodies? Any bodies?" If this was the case, they pulled them out of the wagon; they were mainly children and the old. There and then, three meters from the rail embankment (the bodies) were thrown into hollows with dirt and refuse.[46]

The trains carrying the bulk of the Crimean Tatar population (civilians and the wounded for the most part) trundled across the hot plains of the northern Caucasus and Kazakhstan and, after a two week journey, most made their way to Tashkent, the capital of the dry Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan. According to N.F. Bugai,

[45] Osman Tukay. "The Tragedy of the Crimean Tatars." *Index on Censorship.* 3, no. 1. (1974). pp. 71-72.

[46] Svetlana Alieva. op. cit. no. 19. p. 79.

a specialist on the deportations, a maximum of 191,088 Crimean Tatars were deported from the Crimean autonomous republic in that May of 1944.[47] Of these, N. F. Bugai claims 151,604 were sent to the Uzbek SSR and 8,597 to the Udmurt and Mari Autonomous *Oblasts* (Ural mountain region, part of the Russian Federated Socialist Republic) where they were employed in the lumber industry.[48] Another 10,000 were settled in the Molotov *Oblast* (District).[49] Approximately 7,900 Crimean Tatars died during the actual deportation process according to Michael Rywkin.[50]

Crimean Tatar Relations with Central Asian Populations

There was considerable ambiguity in the West concerning the fate of the deported nations in the years following World War II. Little news of these missing peoples made its way out of the Soviet Union in the 1940s and 1950s and Sovietologists were forced to hypothesize when guessing as to their ultimate fate. In his work on Turkic languages written as late as 1965, Nicholas Poppe, for example, wrote "No details with regard to the exact whereabouts or numbers of the Crimean Tatars are available."[51] Most Western accounts simply made vague claims that the deported nations had been exiled to somewhere in 'Siberia' and very little effort was made to trace the Crimean Tatars. It was only much later that news of the fate of the Crimean Tatars and other deported peoples made its way to those in the West and a picture of the Central Asian exile emerged.

It is only since the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, that the full story of the fate of the deported Crimean Tatars has been told. From newly released Soviet records it appears that Tashkent served as the main dispersion center for the majority of the Crimean

[47] Another account also based on conflicting NKVD sources from 1944 claims that only 187, 859 Crimean Tatars were deported from the Crimea. B. Broshevan and P. Tygliiants. op. cit. no. 5. p. 45.

[48] N.F. Bugai. "K Voprosy o Deportatsii Narodov SSR v 30-40-x godax." *Istoriia SSSR.* no. 6. Nov.-Dec. 1989. pp. 135-144. B. Broshevan and P. Tygliiants. op. cit. no. 5. p. 45.

[49] Nikolai Bugai. *L. Beria-I. Stalinu. Soglasno Vashemu Ukazaniiu.* Moscow. Airo XX. 1995. p. 155.

[50] Michael Rywkin. *Moscow's Lost Empire.* Armonk NY; Sharpe. 1994. p. 67.

[51] Nicholas Poppe. *Introduction to Altaic Linguistics.*. Wiesbaden; Otto Harrassowitz. 1965. p. 44.

Tatars who were sent to Uzbekistan (other deported groups, such as the Chechens and Ingush, were sent to Alma Ata, the capital of the Kazakh SSR). From Tashkent the deportees were then dispersed throughout eastern Uzbekistan, from the Fergana Valley in the north to the deserts of the barren Kashga Darya *Oblast* in the south.[52] According to records sent to Beria in June 1944, the Crimean Tatars were settled in Uzbekistan in the following *oblasts*: Tashkent—56,632, Samarkand—31,540, Andijan—19,630, Fergana—16,039, Namangan—13,804, Kashga Darya—10,171, Bukhara—3,983.[53] According to another source which has slightly different figures, another 2,426 Crimean Tatars ended up in Kazakhstan and 2,472 were eventually transported to Tajikistan.[54]

The Crimean Tatar men who were still fighting for the Soviet homeland on the front (and had thus avoided deportation) were demobilized after the fall of Berlin and joined by the Tatar males deported from the Crimea in labor brigades in Siberia and the Urals region. Many Soviet military commanders, however, hid the identity of the Crimean Tatar soldiers with whom they had served during the war to protect their trusted comrades from the NKVD. Those who were not so fortunate were forced to engage in labor in the harsh conditions of the Siberian lumber, coal and gas camps where the mortality rate from the bitter climate and stressful work meant that thousands never again saw their families or their homeland on the Black Sea.

From my own interviews with survivors of the deportation it appears that most deportees who were deposited in Kazakhstan were well treated by the indigenous populations. Those who were exiled in the Mari Republic found that many of the local inhabitants were themselves deported *kulaks* and political prisoners from the 1920s and 1930s and these were quick to offer assistance. Most accounts, however, stressed the hostility of the Uzbeks towards the deportees in the first year or two in Uzbekistan. The NKVD had been active in the region prior to the deportations, spreading anti-Tatar propaganda against this 'nation of traitors' and it seems to have been particularly effective among the simple Uzbek *kolkhozniks* who had a xenophobic distrust of outsiders. According to the testimony of one deportee, in

[52] Nikolai Bugai. 'Pravda o Deportatsii Chechenskogo i Ingushkogo Narodov.' *Voprosy Istorii.* no. 7. pp. 32-44.

[53] B. Broshevan and P. Tygliiants. op. cit. no. 5. p. 46.

[54] Bugai. op. cit. no. 49. pp. 155 and 159.

some instances the Uzbeks stoned the already stricken Tatars when they arrived in the comparatively backward countryside. The Crimean Tatar physicist and dissident, Rollan Kadiyev claimed "I personally recall how we were met by the local inhabitants, who had been poisoned by Stalin's propaganda. One of the rocks hit me. I was still only a boy." [55]

The Crimean Tatar dissident, Reshat Dzhemilev, wrote "People were dying in droves every day, from hunger, exhaustion, and the unaccustomed climate, but no one would help them bury their dead." According to Dzhemilev "People died from the sharp changes in the climate and the unbearable work, from dystrophy and other illnesses, from cold and malnutrition in the absence of medical care, from nostalgia and from grief over the lost members of their family."[56] All Crimean Tatar families have stories of lost family members that recall the horrible conditions their people encountered in their first two years in Central Asia. The following account given by one deportee is sadly typical:

> My niece, Menube Seyhislamova, with ten children, was deported with us. Her husband, who had been in the Soviet Army from the first day of the war had been killed. And the family of this fallen soldier perished of hunger in exile in Uzbekistan. Only one little girl, Pera, remained alive, but she became a cripple as a result of the horror she had experienced and of hunger.
>
> Our men folk were at the front and there was no one to bury the dead. Corpses would lie for several days among the living. Adshigulsim Adzhimambetova's husband had been captured by the Fascists. Three children, a little girl and two boys, remained with her. This family was also starving just as we were. No one gave either material or moral help. As a result, first of all, the little girl died of hunger, then in one day, both the boys. Their mother could not move from starvation. Then the owner of the house threw the two children's bodies onto the street, onto the side of the irrigation canal. Then some children, the Crimean Tatars, dug little graves and buried the poor little boys.
>
> Can one really tell it all? I have such a weight on my heart that it is difficult to remember it all. Tell me why did they allow such horrors to happen?[57]

Crimean Tatar survivors of the deportation claim that the local Uzbeks did eventually come to aid of the outsiders who had been dumped in their midst after the first year or two. In interviews I

[55] *Tashkentskii Protsess*. Amsterdam; The Herzen Foundation. 1976. p. 590.
[56] Reshat Dzhemilev. op. cit. no. 32. pp. 22-23.
[57] *The Crimean Review*. vol. 1 no. I May 18, 1986. p. 10.

conducted in Tashkent with elderly deportees, they stressed the fact that the Uzbeks accepted the Crimean Tatars when the latter made a point of stressing their shared Islamic beliefs and traditions. The exiled Crimean Tatars made a point of emphasizing the Muslim aspects of their culture and identity to open a dialogue with the local Uzbeks who had maintained much of the traditional, conservative religious traditions lost by the less religious, Europeanized Crimean Tatar population. Islam, in effect, provided a common language of idioms, symbols and shared cultural norms that bridged the differences between these two peoples.

Several older Crimean Tatar interviewees also claimed that the local Uzbeks were taken aback when they discovered that the vast majority of the 'traitors to the homeland' dumped in their midst were actually the elderly, women and children, with many wounded Red Army officers in their midst. Many Uzbek villagers were, according to my informants, ashamed to discover that they had been so initially harsh to women and children who hardly looked like hardened Nazi collaborators.

Soviet statistics back up the Crimean Tatars' claims that the majority of those transported on the terrible journey from the Crimean Peninsula to Uzbekistan were indeed women and children. Of the 151,529 Crimean Tatars deposited in Uzbekistan an astounding 68,287 were children, 55, 684 women and a mere 27, 558 men according to a letter sent to Beria.[58] A full 82% of the Crimean Tatar 'collaborators' brutally deported in 1944 to Uzbekistan then were actually women and children and the majority of the men included in this number were, in all probability, war invalids from the Red Army or the elderly. The abundance of children came as a pleasant surprise for those involved in the deportation for they could squeeze more deportees in a wagon due to their smaller size.

In paintings depicting 'The Deportation' that now hang in art exhibits presented by the Crimean Tatars in the post-Soviet Crimea and Uzbekistan the author noticed a common theme. Invariably the Crimean Tatar artists portrayed the horror stricken victims of the *'echelons'* (cattle transport carts) as weeping women, children and the elderly. Young men never appear in these works. To this day the Crimean Tatars reserve particular revulsion towards the Soviet regime for its treatment of this non-combatant segment of their pop-

[58] B. Broshevan and P. Tygliiants. op. cit. no. 5. p. 45.

ulation who were left defenseless while thousands of their husbands, brothers and fathers were fighting on the front against the German invaders in the ranks of the Red Army.

The desperate situation of the Crimean Tatar elderly, women and children in Central Asia improved significantly when the war ended and many (although not all) Tatar soldiers were allowed to search out their families in the various places of exile between 1945 and 1948. The Crimean Tatars have a distinct genre of stories which speak of the anguish of Crimean Tatar soldiers who were discharged from the Red Army only to return to a Crimea that had been emptied of their families, and entire people. Those who did make their way with great difficulty across the war torn Soviet Union to their families in their special settlement camps in distant Central Asia were automatically declared *spetspereselenets* ('special resettlers') along with their relatives and confined to the special settlement regime. Soviet sources recorded the arrival of approximately 9,000 demobilized Crimean Tatar soldiers to the *spetsposelenets* (special settlement) camps after the war. Most interestingly, Soviet sources mention that 524 of these veterans who automatically became 'traitors to the homeland' were in actuality Soviet officers and 1,392 were sergeants in the Red Army.[59]

With the arrival of many of their fathers, sons, and brothers in 1946, this largely defenseless population had thousands of hardened war veterans to protect them from the abuse of MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) *'kommandants'* and help them rebuild their lives in their places of exile. Several older Crimean Tatar interviewees recalled the rare feelings of joy their community felt when the Crimean Tatar men came back in waves from the front to be reunited with their families. One Crimean Tatar recalled:

> In the first months in Uzbekistan after arrival more than 40,000 Crimean Tatars perished. A primary role in this was played by the circumstance that the local population received the exiles as their personal enemies. Anti-Tatar propaganda was spread among the peoples of Central Asia and the Crimean Tatars were pictured as traitors who had betrayed Central Asian men who were fighting for the Soviet *Rodina* on the front.
>
> A short time passed, then the local population began to understand. Dozens of disabled soldiers without arms or legs, with medals clinking on their chests returned from the front and searched for their mothers, wives, and children but they were no longer in this world...And then the Uzbeks understood that a monstrous injustice had taken place and they began to share their last scrap of *lepishka* (scone), their last handful of *kishmish* (raisins) or nuts.[60]

[59] Ibid. p. 103.

The establishment of a rapport with the indigenous Uzbek population certainly eased the resettlement process for the deported Crimean Tatars. According to first hand accounts, some Crimean Tatar widows initially married Uzbek men who were Hanafi Sunni Muslims like themselves (the war and labor camps had decimated the Tatar male population) and Crimean Tatar orphans were adopted by the local Uzbeks. If one believes Soviet mythology, this tradition of adopting war orphans was an Uzbek national characteristic. One Uzbek of the period, Sham Akhmudov, was reputed to have adopted 15 war orphans and a massive statue to this socialist hero still dominates the square in front of Tashkent's Palace of the Friendship of Peoples.

The Special Settlement Regime

Establishing good relations with the indigenous Central Asian populations was not, however, the deportees' only concern. Upon arrival in Central Asia, the Crimean Tatars, who were considered to be traitors to the homeland by the state and its officials, were forced to live under a punitive regime, in the so called *spetsposelenie* settlements, (special settlement camps). These informal camps surrounded by barbed wire, which were run by the *otdel spetsposelenii* (special settlement department) of the MVD, are remembered with particular repugnance by the Tatars who lived in them. The heads of Crimean Tatar households were required to report to the *spetskommandants* every three days for a *spetsial'nyi uchet* (special accounting report on their family deaths, births, work progress etc.) and those who left their assigned region were arrested and sentenced to five years of hard labor. In these camps Crimean Tatars report that the "The commandants were God and Tsar."[61]

In interviews I held in Uzbekistan, Crimean Tatars told of being woken before dawn for 12 hour workdays in the fields and factories, of Crimean Tatars who were sentenced to the labor camps for

[60] Svetlana Alieva. op. cit. no. 19. p. 93.
[61] Ibid. p. 95.

leaving their restricted areas to visit family members in other camps, and of the cruelty of the hated camp *kommandants*.[62] Living conditions in the settlements were abysmal. Most deportees lived in barracks constructed next to factories, dug outs, or simple huts hastily built of unbaked dried mud bricks during the *spetsposelenie* years.

As 'enemies of the people,' the Crimean Tatars had no rights as Soviet citizens during this period and their group aspirations were reduced to one basic objective, communal survival. One Crimean Tatar whose mother died in the settlement camps remembers her last words "continue the race" *(prodolzhit rod)* and this appears to have been a national mission for the Crimean Tatars who fought to keep their nation alive.[63]

This simple task was made all the more difficult by the Crimean Tatars' difficulties in adjusting to their new environment. The natural environment of Uzbekistan, with its blistering dry summers, droughts and desert oasis conditions (except in the high Fergana Valley) differed markedly from that of the coastal Black Sea home of the Crimean Tatars. The majority of the Crimean Tatars had previously lived in the valleys and foothills of the peninsula's Yaila mountains or the Yaliboyu coast and were unaccustomed to the conditions they found in the arid lands of Uzbekistan. Uzbek medical facilities were filled during this period with Crimean Tatars who began to die off in large numbers due to their lack of immunity to local diseases, such as malaria, dysentery, dystrophy, yellow fever and other intestinal illnesses, which were not found in the Crimean Peninsula, where the water was purer. Women and children died in the greatest numbers.

In addition, the majority of the deportees were from the Crimean countryside and according to NKVD sources, a mere 18,983 of the exiles were actually deported from towns in the Crimea.[64] Few Crimean Tatar farmers could acquire fields in the land-starved Uzbek oases and overpopulated Fergana Valley and most of these village peasants were forced to find work in mines or factories (the only jobs available due to the Uzbeks' loathing of such work) located for the most part in large cities such as Tashkent. One source records that

[62] B. Broshevan and P. Tygliiants. op. cit. no. 5. p. 103.
[63] Adam Smith Albion. "Crimean Diary." *Institute of Current World Affairs.* July 20, 1995. p. 3.
[64] B. Broshevan and P. Tygliiants. op. cit. no. 5. p. 44 and p. 49.

during the first few years in Uzbekistan "It was characteristic that the *spetspereselenets* from the Crimean Tatars were frequently assigned to the most trying and heaviest construction enterprises."[65]

Crimean Tatars who were settled in the Tashkent vicinity in such towns as Chircik, Angren, Gulistan and Yangi Yul or in the Fergana Valley towns of Marghilan, Andijan, Namangan, and Fergana were forced to labor as menial workers in the many factories that had been evacuated to this region from the western Soviet Union during the German invasion. In an order of May 1944, Stalin clearly ordered Uzbek officials to settle the 'special settlers' from the Crimea in *sovkhozes* (state farms), *kolkhozes* (collective farms) and factory settlements for "utilization" in village agriculture and industry.[66] According to one source "The Crimean Tatars, to a considerable degree, satisfied the need for the speedy development of industry in the republics of Central Asia."[67] In their work on the Crimean Tatars, M. Guboglo and S. Chervonnaia write:

> In the places of 'special settlement' the Crimean Tatars were subjected to a special regime, the aim of which was the destruction of the traditional modes of production, which had been forged over the centuries by systems of life security among the Crimean Tatars. Prior to the war, in the Crimea, they were primarily involved in village production and were especially famous for their skill in gardening, in wine producing, and tobacco growing. In their new regions of inhabitation they were settled in barracks, communal housing, hurriedly constructed temporary shelters, and annexes located by factories, the Crimean Tatars, regardless of their previous occupation, were transferred to heavy labor in various spheres of industry. The roots of national distinction were cut to the root.[68]

The cutting of the Crimean Tatars' 'roots' in the soil of the Crimea was to be permanent and few of the Crimean Tatars' traditional agricultural skills were to survive this disruption. In the post-Soviet Crimea the repatriated Crimean Tatars suffer from this sundering of their agrarian ties to the Crimea.

In the southern region of Kashka Darya and Bukhara another form of forced labor prevailed among the Crimean Tatars. Crimean Tatar

[65] Ibid. p. 100.
[66] N.F. Bugai. op. cit. no. 3. p. 136.
[67] B.L. Finogeev et. al. *Krymskotatarskie Zhenshchiny: Tryd, Byt, Traditsii.* Simferopol; Crimean State Committee for National Affairs. 1994. p. 15.
[68] M. Guboglo and S. Chervonnaia. *Krymskotatarskoe Natsional'noe Dvizhenie. vol. 1.* Moscow; Russian Academy of Science. 1992. p. 76.

farmers who had worked for centuries maintaining the specialized mountain irrigation canals of their forefathers, were now forced to work 12 hour days under the hot sun in Uzbekistan's 'cotton *Gulag*.' Moscow had turned much of the deserts of Central Asia into a vast, artificially irrigated cotton field and, with the arrival of the Crimean Tatar deportees, a class of *helots* had been provided to develop this region. Many Crimean Tatars suffered subsequent health problems from working in the pesticide coated cotton fields or as menial laborers in the unhealthy conditions of Uzbekistan's factories.

Release from the Special Settlements

The Crimean Tatars suffered in this alien land for twelve long years under the *kommandant* regime before they were released from the special settlements. With the death of Josef Stalin in 1953 the Soviet Union experienced a political thaw which had a direct impact on the punished peoples who had been deported to Central Asia. In an effort to rectify some of Stalin's greater injustices, new Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, lifted the special settlement regime in 1956 and allowed the Crimean Tatar survivors to begin the process of reintegrating themselves into Soviet society. In addition to exculpating the Crimean Tatars and other deported nations of the spurious charges of 'mass treason' leveled against them by Stalin, Khrushchev went so far as to allow several of the exonerated nations to return to their reconstituted home republics in the following year. These included the Kalmyks, Karachai, Balkars and the bellicose Chechen and Ingush highlanders who had begun an uncontrollable surge to their Caucasian homelands after the feared Stalin's death.

In regards to the Chechens, Khrushchev's decree may have actually been a reaction to events from below for this restless nationality had never accepted its exile in Central Asia graciously. The following is a typical account of Chechen resistance in a Siberian hard labor camp established for those caught leaving the 'special settlements':

> In the concentration camps there were over 4,000 arrested Chechens. When they heard that their compatriots in the transit prison had rebelled, they did the same, killed the camp administrators, burnt down camps No.s 3 and 4, broke into the internal guard house, where they killed the camp controller who kept a list of internees, and seized machine guns and ammunition. With the help of these arms, the Chechens killed the sentries in the guard towers and, firing back at the guards as they ran, escaped into the taiga.[69]

Three national groups were, however, completely ignored in Khrushchev's amnesty decree allowing for the repatriation of the various ethnic groups deported from the Caucasus region. These were the Volga Germans, Meshketian Turks and the Crimean Tatars. For reasons that were undoubtedly related to the strategic and economic importance of their former homeland republics, these three groups were completely ignored by Khrushchev and condemned to remain in Central Asia. Their forced exile was to be permanent.

The Crimean Tatars, Meshketian Turks, and Volga Germans were allowed to leave their camps but were subject to arrest if they attempted to resettle in their former republic-territories. All three groups were forced to witness the joyous repatriation of the other deported nations to their homelands and to begin the process of rebuilding their lives in the homeland-Soviet republics of the Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Tajiks.

Aleksander Nekrich, has claimed that "If the Crimean Tatars had done as the Caucasians then did, had flooded back to the Crimea by the thousands, it is likely that they too would have won the restoration of their autonomous republic in the framework of the Ukrainian SSR."[70] This statement, however, overlooks the fact that the Crimean Tatars were not a numerous people like the Chechens nor did they have the martial tradition of the highlanders. In addition, their peninsular homeland was harder to access (the narrow Perekop entrance to the Crimea was easily controlled), and the distance to the Crimea, which had been filled with Slavs in their absence, was greater. It became obvious to the scattered Crimean Tatar exiles that they could not force their way back to their distant homeland.

Assessing the Damage of the Deportation

It was at this time that the Crimean Tatars began the task of rebuilding their shattered society and assessing the damage to their

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[69] R. Kacha. "Genocide in the Northern Caucasus." *Caucasian Review.* no. 2. 1956. p. 82.

[70] Alexander Nekhrich. op. cit. no. 14. p. 137.

devastated nation. The Crimean Tatars' stoic resiliency and determination to rebuild their lives 'from zero' as they describe it was summed up by one exile who claimed "The people did not lose their presence of mind. As the saying goes 'the living think of life.' Thus the Crimean Tatars gradually overcame the crushing disaster and horror and, step by step, included themselves in the work process, adapted to their new place and took to their surrounding living environment."[71] Among the Crimean Tatars' first tasks was the uniting of splintered families and discovering which neighbors, friends and family members had been lost in this communal disaster. Crimean Tatar activists and the remnants of the pre-deportation Crimean ASSR Communist leadership (which had been deported despite its loyalty during the war) traveled throughout the settlements in Central Asia and conducted a self census to ascertain the magnitude of the damage to the nation in demographic terms.

As the results were correlated by daring activists, the enormity of the tragedy became strikingly apparent. The *ad hoc* Crimean Tatar census committees came to the conclusion that 46% of their nation had been killed in the deportation and resettlement process. In fact, to this very day Crimean Tatars in the Crimea, Uzbekistan, Turkey, the Dobruca and the USA recite this statistic in much the same way Jews have committed the number 6 million to their communal memory of The Holocaust.

This statistic is, however, treated with caution by most outside observers and Ann Sheehy and Bohdan Nahylo dispute this statistic in their work.[72] Kremlin sources based upon the bi-weekly reports made by Crimean Tatars in the special settlements report that the Crimean Tatar population in Uzbekistan had dwindled from 151,604 to 119,460 by the year 1946 (i.e. a loss of 30,000, 'only' 20% of the total exile population).[73] By 1948 between 40,000 and 44,000 Crimean Tatars had died in Uzbekistan and their number was certainly not replaced by the birth of 6,564 Crimean Tatars in this period.[74] Most Crimean Tatars claim the death rate in Siberia, where the winters were extremely cold, was actually higher than that in Central

[71] B.L. Finogeev. op. cit. no. 67. p. 15.
[72] Ann Sheehy and Bohdan Nahylo. *The Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans and Meshketians. Soviet Treatment of Some National Minorities*. London; Minority Rights Group. 1980. p. 8.
[73] B. Broshevan and P. Tygliiants. op. cit. no. 5. p. 106.
[74] Ibid.

Asia but there are no accurate statistics from this region. The total percentage of those killed in the deportation and resettlement in the first five years was probably closer to 30% of the deported population.

By the 1950s the Crimean Tatar death rate had fallen dramatically and this community once again appeared stable, but the losses incurred by this small people in the war, deportation and resettlement took a considerable toll. At minimum this people lost 80,000 out of a pre-war population of 218,000 due to evacuation by the Nazis, forced labor in Germany, war-time losses in combat and raids by partisans and Nazi forces, and deaths due to the deportation and resettlement. In sociological and demographic terms the communal trauma resulting from the loss of such a high proportion (more than one in three) of this community on the Crimean Tatar people cannot be overestimated.

This tremendous injustice was covered up both domestically and abroad by propaganda which stressed the 'voluntary' nature of the Crimean Tatars' transfer to Central Asia. [75] M.A. Vyltsan, for example, claims that during the operations, the NKVD used the term *pereselenie* (resettlement) for internal consumption rather than *izganie* (expulsion, deportation) which came into usage at a later date.[76]

The Crimean Tatars were not unique in experiencing heavy losses during this 'voluntary resettlement.' In his work on genocide in the Soviet Union, R.J. Rummel estimates that of the 1,600,000 members of the Soviet nations deported during the war, almost one in three (approximately 530,000) died, vividly demonstrating that the war time deportation of Soviet nationalities was one of the best kept examples of genocide in the twentieth century.[77]

For the surviving Crimean Tatars, Guboglo and Chervonnaia claim "It is apparent that the authorities planned on the Crimean Tatars being assimilated by the population of the Central Asian republics."[78] Most scholars familiar with the Crimean Tatars' plight

[75] M.A. Vyltsan. "Deportatsiia Narodov v Gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny." *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie*. no. 3. May-June. 1995. p. 28.
[76] M.I. Isayev. *National Languages in the USSR. Problems and Solutions*. Moscow; Progress Publishers. 1977. p. 105. In his 1977 work which was translated into English for consumption abroad, Soviet linguist, M.I. Isayev wrote "the Crimean Tatar language is the mother tongue of the Turkic population that inhabited the Crimean Peninsula and most of whom have currently resettled in the Uzbek SSR."
[77] R.J. Rummel. *Lethal Politics. Soviet Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1917*. New Brunswick; Transaction Publishers. 1990. p. 158.
[78] M. Guboglo and S. Chervonnaia. op. cit. no. 68. p. 80.

predicted that this scattered people, who had been deprived of their identity and official homeland would, in a generation, be assimilated in the Central Asian ethnic cauldron like many ethnic groups before them. The process of assimilation would, in theory, be facilitated by the fact that the customs, Islamic cultural identity and shared Turkic language (excluding the Tajiks) of the surrounding indigenous Turco-Muslim population of Central Asia were closely related to those of the Crimean Tatars.

In socio-political terms the Crimean Tatar nation had been all but destroyed by the deportation and was in danger of complete social disintegration as distinct ethnie. By stripping the Crimean Tatars of their territorial basis for recognition, the Crimean ASSR, the Kremlin had erased this non-nation of "traitors" from the USSR's ethnic map. Schooling for the Crimean Tatars was now to be in Russian, their national literature had been destroyed, they had no prerogatives based on nationality and they were no longer recognized as a distinct people. It soon became apparent that the unique Crimean Tatar national identity forged by the Young Tatars, the *Vatan* Society, the *Milli Firka* and 'Veli Ibrahimovists' had been slated for total eradication by the Stalinist regime. By 1945 the *entire* Crimean Tatar people were in diaspora and found themselves scattered throughout Displacement Camps in Italy, Germany and Austria, in exile in Central Asia and Siberia or living in the Dobruca or Turkey. With the complete dispersal of this people from their homeland, the distinct Crimean Tatar identity appeared to be in danger in all of these diasporas.

The Crimean Tatars of the diaspora often use the term *jenosit* (genocide) to describe the deportation of their people to Central Asia and the high mortality rate resulting from the deportation and resettlement lend credence to these claims.[79] It is, however, clear that Stalin had the resources at his disposal to physically annihilate this small group in its entirety if he so desired. It appears rather that, by removing the territorial base for the Crimean Tatars' officially recognized national identity, the Kremlin was engaged in a more 'subtle' policy now known as ethnocide, i.e. the eradication of an ethno-national group's communal identity, spirit, collective memory, language, customs and history (an objective that is, in its most extreme cases, achieved by genocide).[80]

[79] E. Seydamet. "Eski Şehir Milletvekili." *Emel.* May-June. 1994. no. 203. p. 10.

[80] Although the right to live in one's homeland is not recognized by any international convention or addendum to the universal human rights covenants, the deportation of native populations was prosecuted as a crime against humanity at the Nuremberg trials. On the right to live in one's homeland Alfred de Zayas has written "The denial of the right to live in one's homeland necessarily entails the violation of such rights as the right to self-determination, which many consider to be *jus cogens*, or a peremptory norm of international law. Without the right to one's homeland, persons could be forcibly expelled from their native lands and thus deprived not only of self-determination but also of the exercise of most civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights that are widely recognized in international law. Alfred de Zayas. "The Right to One's Homeland, Ethnic Cleansing, and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia." *Criminal Law Forum.* vol. 6, no. 2. 1995. p. 258.

Scattered across thousands of miles, throughout five Soviet republics, with none of the institutions of *korenizatsiia* to help them sustain their national identity, few expected the Crimean Tatars to maintain their separate national identity in the post-war years. Fewer still expected this scattered group to sustain any sense of cohesion or links to the lost Crimean homeland for more than a generation.

The all powerful bureaucracy of the Soviet government was now devoted to 'de-rooting' this *korennoi narod* from its homeland-republic and the Crimean Tatars' prospects for returning to the homeland were virtually non-existent. Lemercier Quelquejay's gloomy pronouncement that "the Crimean Tatars are doomed to be assimilated by the peoples among whom they are now living. Thus a people with a long, glorious and tragic past will disappear from history" was a typical Western prognosis for this small, seemingly doomed nation.[81]

If the forced dispersion of this group throughout the USSR was not sufficient to achieve the 'de-nationalization' of the Crimean Tatars and eradication of this ancient ethnos, the Soviet government enacted a policy of 'de-Tatarization' in the Crimean Tatars' former homeland designed to obliterate all traces of the Crimean Tatars' centuries long inhabitation of the peninsula. In many ways this destruction of the Crimean Tatars' heritage in the Crimea paralleled the destruction of hundreds of years of Muslim culture in Bosnia by Serbian and Croatian forces in areas cleansed of their Muslim populations in the 1990s.

[81] Lemercier Quelquejay. "The Tatars of the Crimea, A Retrospective Summary." *Central Asian Review.* 16, 1968. no 1. p. 25

The De-Tatarization of the Crimean Homeland

Following the demotion of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1945 the Soviet government used its vast resources to eradicate any memory of the Crimean ASSR's existence. Crimean Tatar language textbooks published in the 1920s were burned, all manifestations of *korenizatsiia* in the Crimea were removed and many aspects of the Crimean Tatars' long history in the Crimea destroyed. The local Crimean authorities actively severed many of the Crimean Tatars' historic and cultural 'roots' to this imagined homeland. In the Crimean Tatars' villages, for example, many traces of Tatar culture (simple village mosques, Muslim cemeteries, fountains etc.) were destroyed. While most of the large historic mosques of the Crimea, such as the Cuma Cami in Evpatoriia, the Khan Cami in Bahçesaray, the Kebir Cami in Simferopol, and the Uzbek Khan mosque in Eski Kirim, were left alone (or utilized as atheist museums or warehouses), small village mosques of less historic importance, local *medreses* and ancient marble fountains were destroyed throughout the Crimea. The only major mosque destroyed during the exile period was the Ottoman-style mosque which dominated the skyline of the coastal city of Gurzuf.

Ancient Crimean Tatar village or topographic names (often with pre-Mongol origins) were changed overnight by administrative caveat. Thus the Ak Mecit (White Mosque) district became the Chernomorskii (Black Sea) district, Alushta became Kutusovskii (in honor of a Russian general wounded by the Turks in the vicinity), Bahçesaray became Pushkinskii (in reference to this Russian writer's famous visit here), Balaklava became Nakhimovskii (a Russian general who served in the Crimean War) Karasu Bazar became Belogorsk (White City) and the district around it Partisankii, Büyük Onlar became Gvardskii (Guard), Kolay became Vasilievskii (in honor of Soviet general of World War II) and so on.

This cultural and administrative Russification of the Crimean Tatars' homeland was paralleled by government sponsored settlement of Russians from the Voronezh, Briansk, Tambovsk, Kursk and Rostov regions and Ukrainians from Kievsk, Chernigovsk, Poltavsk, and Kamenets-Podolsk regions in the Crimea. With the departure of the industrious Crimean Tatars from the southern Crimea, the abandoned *kolkhozes* and *sovkhozes* of this region were in dire need of labor hands and the Soviet government actively transferred tens of

thousands of Slavs to this region to meet the dearth of work hands.

In many ways the effects of the departure of over 200,000 Crimean Tatar peasants from the Crimea who were skilled in viniculture, tobacco farming, grain growing and step terracing had the same devastating effect on this unique region that the departure of approximately 200,000 Crimean Muslims had almost a century earlier after the Crimean War. According to V. Broshevan and P. Tygliiants "After the deportation from the Crimea of the 'punished' peoples a catastrophic situation arose on the peninsula. In addition to the damage wrecked on the economy by the war, the republic now lost many work hands, specialists."[82] Eyewitness to the desolation left behind in the empty Crimea countryside of the south report that:

> In the region of Ulu Uzen in the Alushta region in the mountains there were tens of thousands of herds of small cattle remaining after the expulsion of the Tatars.
>
> The cattle were not guarded by anyone and there were instances when certain soldiers drove off huge herds of 100-200 head explaining that this herd had no owner.
>
> In the village of Ulu Uzen on the premises of a mosque all the possessions left by the Tatars were gathered. As a result of the lack of guards this state property was constantly plundered.[83]

Hundreds of thousands of simple Slavic *kolkhozniks* from southern Russia were resettled in the farms, houses and villages of the deported Tatars at this time. According to most estimates a full 90% of the Slavic population of the Crimea actually arrived in the peninsula after the war.[84] In many instances the Slavic arrivals sub-divided the long, stone houses of the Crimean Tatars built to house several generations and turned them into several smaller units which can still be found in divided sections throughout the Crimea. Many of the new settlers found household items, such as chairs, beds, farming tools and utensils left behind by the Crimean Tatars awaiting them.

Crimean Tatars who managed to furtively return visit to their old homes and villages in the 1960s have left many stories of the sorrow that confronted them upon arriving in the off-limits Crimea to find strangers living in their ancestral cottages. The following poem

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[82] B. Broshevan and P. Tygliiants. op. cit. no. 5. p. 74.

[83] Ibid. p. 80.

[84] Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia. "The Crimean Tatar Question and the Present Ethnopolitical Situation in the Crimea." *Russian Politics and Law*. vol. 33, no. 6. p. 39.

by one such secret returnee entitled 'Ballad of the Ancestral Home' *(Ballada ob Otchem Dome)* captures some of this anguish:

> I am a Crimean Tatar. I am the son of these sunny mountains,
> To which I have stolen today like a thief.
> A squeamish functionary, having lowered his fish-like eyes,
> Issued me a residence permit...for 24 hours.
>
> I greet Ayu Dağ (Bear Mountain) and the dove gray misty Yaila!
> I have not been to my sad homeland for so long!
> Here is the mud walled house in which I was born and lived.
> The fig tree my grandfather planted has grown so much!
>
> Our vineyard and tiny stone garden,
> Are, as before, filled with the festive ringing of cicadas.
> The bumpy muscles of vine, like my grandfather's hands,
> Are hard, resilient, and darkened by rain and dew.
>
> The muscat is ripening! But I will not harvest it.
> I am stealing along the back yard of my father's house like a thief.
> Here is the white well and the frail, singing source...
> Some jaunty retired officer is busying himself in the garden.
>
> He is digging a cellar (or maybe a latrine?)
> Oh, what has he done, he has overturned the stone in the corner!
> The age old gravestone under the quince tree full of chinks,
> Where all my ancestors are lying...their heads pointing eastwards!
>
> He thinks the sacred bones are those of a goat and breaks them with a spade...Allah forgive the unbeliever!
> We look at each other in the eyes for such a long time and with such difficulty.
> He calls for somebody, letting his dog with its long mane loose.
>
> Do not do it colonel! I will not take your fruit.
> You can run my mud walled house for now.
> Tomorrow I will go back to faraway Chimkent (S. Kazakhstan)
> I am only an observer, a keeper of ancestral legends.
>
> I am an unwanted ghost, a fleeting shade on the wall,
> Although bitter ashes churn and smolder in me.
> I am conscience and a riot, and someone's deep shame.
> I am a Crimean Tatar, I am a son of these sunny mountains.[85]

Elderly Crimean Tatars who have returned to Crimea since 1989 have similar tales of visiting their white-washed ancestral homes and seeing chests, tables, wall hangings, farming implements and other

[85] Viktora Nekipelova. "Spuchitsiia i Tleet vo Mne." *Kĭrim*. 1997. August 23. p. 3.

treasured heirlooms that they remembered from their youth still in place in Russian-inhabited homes. It is increasingly rare, however, that the Slavs living in former Crimean Tatar homes allow Crimean Tatars to enter these cherished places from their past. Most Slavs living in these distinctive stone cottages are in fact made uneasy by the return of former owners and refuse to allow the distrusted Crimean Tatar repatriates into their former homes.

This attitude of distrust towards the Crimean Tatars was of course promoted from the 1940s right up to the 1990s by popular works such as Nadinskii's *Essays on the History of the Crimea (Ocherkii po Istorii Kryma)*. It was endlessly taught in the post-deportation Crimea that the primitive Tatar-Mongols who had previously 'occupied' the peninsula were traitors to the Soviet homeland and undeveloped Mongol nomads with no links to the land. In 1948 a conference was held in the Crimea in which such topics as the "Bolshevik Party in the Struggle Against the Tatar Bourgeois Nationalists," were discussed and everywhere crumbling village mosques were destroyed, villages, hills and streams given Russian names and the memory of the departed Tatar-traitors eradicated.[86] Stories of the Crimean Tatars' 'betrayal' were spread and exaggerated and, in the process, the Russian and Ukrainian settlers (many of whom were themselves forcefully settled in the peninsula) legitimized their occupation of the coastal and, to a lesser extent, mountain villages of the Crimea's traditionally Tatar south.

In subsequent years, word of the Crimean Tatars' betrayal actually spread beyond the borders of the USSR. Several thousand Crimean Tatar emigrants who made their way from Displacement Camps in Europe to the USA (mainly to New York and New Jersey) after the war, for example, were in fact reluctant to identify themselves as Crimean Tatars in this new land for almost 30 years for fear of being labeled 'Nazis.' While this emigrant group's fears may appear to have been exaggerated, it is interesting to note that perhaps the greatest exaggerated indictment of the Crimean Tatars as Nazi collaborators in fact comes from the USA. In a 1993 article on ethnic cleansing published in the highly respected journal *Foreign Affairs*, Andrew Bell Fialkov makes a preposterous accusation against the Crimean 'Tartars' (who were of course a minority in the largely Slavic Crimea during the war) that surpasses even Stalin's blanket accusa-

[86] "Sessia po Istorii Kryma." *Voprosy Istorii*. no. 12. Dec. 1948. p. 148.

tions of betrayal as an excuse for deporting the Crimean Tatar people. According to Bell Fialkov:

> During the war Crimean Tartars formally requested permission from Romania, the occupying power, to exterminate all Russians remaining in the peninsula. When the request was denied, the Tartar Council organized a mass slaughter on its own, killing between 70,000 and 120,000 Russians. Consequently the Tartars too were transferred en masse by the Soviets after the war.[87]

If an American scholar in the late 20th century is willing to propagate such dangerously inaccurate accusations how much easier was it for the simple Russian and Ukrainian peasants in the 1940s to believe government propaganda concerning the reasons for the deportation of the Crimea's Tatar population?

On June 30, 1945, Stalin had the Crimean ASSR downgraded to the status of a regular *oblast* (district) within the Russian Republic and, for all intents and purposes, the Crimea, cleansed of its previous inhabitants, was now in every sense an integral part of the Slavic world. In 1954 Stalin's successor, Nikita Khrushchev transferred the Crimean *oblast* from Russia to the Ukraine in a (at the time!) purely symbolic gesture celebrating the 300th anniversary of the Cossack Ukraine's unification with Russia in 1654. Khrushchev may have had the ulterior motive of winning over the Ukrainian Communist leadership in his struggle for the Kremlin following Stalin's death.[88]

By the late 1950s, the sun baked, semi-tropical shore of the southern Crimea had been developed into the USSR's premiere vacation resort. Once-lazy Tatar coastal hamlets were replaced by bustling sanitoria, *khirorts* (resorts), Young Pioneer camps, and hotels which catered to millions of Soviet citizens who vacationed in a proletarian playground few could guess had been inhabited by Yaliboyu Tatar farmers for centuries. Soviet guidebooks for the Crimea mentioned the 'Tatar Mongol' inhabitants of the Crimea in passing, as if this people were barbaric Scythians or Huns of a bygone era not a living Soviet people languishing in exile in the depths of the USSR.

[87] Andrew Bell-Fialkoff. "A Brief History of Ethnic Cleansing." *Foreign Affairs*. vol. 72. no. 3. p. 115. It is hoped that Bell-Fialkoff's irresponsible side mention of the Crimean Tatars in his article and in a later book will not have an impact on others unfamiliar with the facts concerning the Crimean Tatars' war-time history.

[88] See Edward Ozhiganov's insightful article. "The Crimean Republic: Rivalries for Control." *Managing Conflict in the Former Soviet Union: Russian and American Perspectives*. Cambridge Mass; MIT Press. 1997. p. 93.

The following account from a 1961 guide to the Crimea is typical of works from the era which stressed the Crimea's natural beauty while overlooking its indigenous inhabitants' history on the land. "The Crimean landscapes are remarkably unique. The resort cities form amphitheaters at the foot of mountains, on the shores of tranquil, cozy bays. The evergreen parks, the quaint summits with glistening snowcaps, the white-stone sanitarium buildings, the blue of the sea expanses, create a splendid harmony of colors."[89]

To most Soviet citizens the Crimea was an All-Union Resort and, with the exception the Bahçesaray Palace People's Museum, an oft visited tourist site dedicated to Pushkin's 'Fountain of Tears' (a well known poem about a Polish female captive in the Khan's harem which enforced the notion of the Crimean Tatars as barbarians) and the Crimea's 'feudal Mongol past,' there was little in the Crimea to remind one of the flourishing *korenizatsiia* period or 600 hundred years of Muslim presence in the Crimea. Alexandre Bennigsen was to provide a post-script for this lost Muslim Tatar nation during this time writing "There are no Tatars left in the Crimea and the territory which played a considerable role in the history of the *Dar ul-Islam* is lost forever to that world."[90]

As is known, the Crimean Tatars did not of course lose their unique national identity in Central Asia despite all of these tragic events and, generation after generation, this small nation kept its emotional link to the Crimean Peninsula alive. The Crimean Tatars of Central Asia, from 1944 to the present, are in every respect a classic diasporic group in their refusal to assimilate in their surrounding environment and their conscious effort to actively link themselves to another land that continued to be constructed as a 'homeland.' This unique diasporic group phenomenon (which has been completely overlooked by the majority of works dealing with the durability and tenacity of diasporic identities due to the off-limits nature of the Crimean Tatar community during the Soviet period) was certainly responsible for sustaining this small people's identity, language, traditions and culture in the face of 40 odd years of displacement and state-sponsored ethnocide.

With the weakening of the Soviet center's power in the late Gorbachev era the Crimean Tatars have begun an, as yet, unfin-

[89] A. Shuster. *Krym*. Kiev; Ministerstva Kulturi U.R.S.R. 1961. p. 6.

[90] Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup. *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State*. New York; St. Martin's Press. 1983. p. 18.

ished return migration to an imagined homeland that has every bit the lure to this new generation of Crimean Tatar nationalists that the religiously-defined *ak toprak* had to this people's ancestors a century earlier.

The Crimean Tatars' amazing phoenix-like ability to rebuild their society after the horrors of state sponsored nation destruction and their capacity to organize a mass repatriation to the Crimea since 1989 provide one of the most enduring testimonies to the durability of modern, territorialized national identities in the 20th century. While the collapse of the Communism in Soviet Eurasia has led to many unforeseen occurrences in this diverse region, few events would have been deemed as improbable during the Soviet period as the return of several generations of exiled Crimean Tatars from Central Asia to their Slavicized homeland in the West. Even fewer could have imagined this group reconstituting itself as a nation in the Crimea and once again holding *kurultays* in this playground for the Communist elite. An analysis of the Crimean Tatar struggle to return during the Soviet period and the post-Soviet repatriation movement will trace the final development of the Crimean Tatars' modern national identity and demonstrate the difficulties this long-suffering people have come to face in the post-Soviet context as they attempt to rebuild their nation in its historic homeland.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

RETURN. THE POST-SOVIET CRIMEAN TATAR MIGRATIONS FROM CENTRAL ASIA TO THE CRIMEA

One can imagine the psychological impact that the mass return of a quarter of a million Tatar Muslim exiles to the Crimean Peninsula had on this region's Slavic population in the early 1990s. For 45 years the Crimea had provided a stable environment for Muscovites on which to build their beloved *dachas* (summer houses) in the warm Black Sea sun, a welcoming destination for retirees from the Soviet navy and a safe Slavic haven for Russians who had begun to feel insecure in the early 1990s in the *blizhnee zarubezh'e* ('near abroad' i.e. former Soviet republics) due to rising national tension and anti-outsider nativism in the Soviet republics from Dushanbe to Vilnius.

As the Crimean Tatars began to arrive in the Crimea in the early 1990s by the tens of thousands they commenced several actions which worried the local Slavic population. These actions included well organized land seizures of marginal lands in the Crimea; the building of squatter camps; and clashes with the local authorities. It may very well have seemed to the Crimea's conservative, predominately pro-Communist Russian population that the troubles of distant Armenia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Georgia had finally arrived on the Crimea's doorstep in the form of the long-banished descendants of Chingis Khan's Mongol hordes. As in the West, the Russians of the Crimea were quick to attribute any Muslim group's collective action to Muslim fundamentalism and many Crimean Russians feared for the Crimea's stability with the potential arrival of half a million 'Muslim fanatics' in the Crimean Peninsula.

Even a cursory glance at the Crimean Tatars' history during the 20th century would have shown, however, that the Crimean Tatar return movement of the early 1990s was hardly motivated by what local Crimean Russians often described as a *"jihad."* While it is true the Crimean Tatars had been deposited by Stalin in a land that has long been more Islamic in its ways and mores than the Crimea, this experience had little effect in Islamicizing the Crimean Tatar exiles. As will be shown, it was actually a very secular nationalist move-

ment based on a unique, territorialized communal identity that led to the unexpected migration of a quarter of a million Crimean Tatars to the Crimean Peninsula in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse. It was this unique identity, based on the diasporic notion of a lost fatherland, that enabled the Crimean Tatars to maintain their sense of community for almost 50 years of exile and ultimately made their repatriation to the Crimea possible, not a fundamentalist Islamic tradition.

Sustaining Group Identity in Exile

An analysis of the ways in which the Crimean Tatar people sustained their national identity in the most unpropitious of circumstances presents an interesting case study in the durability of the political phenomenon of mass-based ethno-nationalism. Such an analysis can also provide considerable insight into the ways in which diasporic national movements can unify and politically mobilize even small, fragmented ethnic groups.

In seeking to answer the question of how this exiled micro-nation preserved its national identity in the Central Asian context many of the answers I initially received pointed to the tremendous role of family in keeping a sense of 'Crimean Tatarness' alive.[1] Robert Kaiser has pointed out that "A population's national self-consciousness must be reconstructed with each generation" and among the Crimean Tatars it was the parents and grandparents who acted as the repositories of the customs and memories of the old homeland and perpetuated a Crimean Tatar identity in their new land.[2] It was the Crimean Tatar women in particular who taught the new generations growing up in Central Asia how to make *çibörek, sarma, kubitye, yantyk, burma* and other examples of Tatar 'national' cuisine. It was they who kept traditional songs from the Crimea alive and instilled in succeeding generations a sense of identification with the Crimean

[1] This theory was first brought to my attention by Mubeyyin Batu Altan in his excellent article. "Structures. The Importance of Family-A Personal Memoir." *Tatars of the Crimea. Return to the Homeland.* Durham; Duke Univ. Press. 1998. pp. 99-110.

[2] Robert Kaiser. *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the USSR.* Princeton, Princeton Univ. Press, 1994. p. 30.

Tatar people...and a related sense of separateness from the surrounding peoples.

In addition, the older generations kept the memory of 'The Deportation' alive in the minds of new generations that had not actually experienced this tragedy themselves and, in this fashion, perpetuated the communal memory of this great injustice to the Crimean Tatar people. Just as the post-Holocaust Jews kept the memory of the unparalleled atrocity of the *Shoah* alive as a primary symbolic marker of their communal identity, all Crimean Tatars could cite the 46% deportation mortality statistic and retell stories of the deportation as if they had themselves experienced it.

There are of course many parallel examples of this sort of transgenerational transmission of a 'chosen trauma.' This widely studied sense of communal grievance played the same role in the eventual political mobilization of the Crimean Tatars that the communal history of group expulsion played in politicizing Tutsi expellees from Rwanda living in Uganda, Burundi, and the Congo (Zaire) from the 1950s to the 1990s. The Palestinian refugees' sense of profound injustice which came about as a result of their expulsion from their homeland in 1948 following *al-Naqba* (The Disaster) had a similar effect. In these cases, the communal memory of this chosen trauma has served to mobilize and politicize a previously latent national identity. This strong sense of injustice also prevented the Crimean Tatars in Central Asia, like the Palestine refugees in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon or Tutsis living in diaspora, from accepting their condition as permanent.

Ritualized narratives which expressed communal grievances and kept alive the memory of the injustices committed against the people were passed on from generation to generation among the Crimean Tatars of Central Asia.[3] In this fashion memories of the *Deportatsiia* and the lost homeland, once again described as the *yeşil ada* or *yeşil*

[3] For the most part, few in the West have made an effort to understand the Chechens and their history of oppression at the hands of the Russian and Soviet governments. In particular one cannot understand the Chechen people's decision to confront the might of Russia twice since the fall of the USSR without understanding the underlying significance of the collective memory of their deportation in 1944. For analysis of the Chechen deportation see Brian Williams. "Commemorating 'The Deportation' in Post-Soviet Chechnya. The Role of Memorialization and Collective Memory in the 1994-96 and 1999-2000 Russo Chechen Wars." *History and Memory*. vol. 12, no. 1. 2000.

yurt, were kept alive in the minds of children and grandchildren of the deportees.

The narratives of the deportation from the 'island' homeland usually begin with an idealistic portrayal of the Crimean ASSR and home village or micro region in the peninsula prior to the deportations. The Crimean countryside is glorified and the political rights of the Crimean Tatars in 'their' republic recalled.[4] The narratives describe the horror of removal from the 'Eden' of the Crimea and seek to bring to life the true nature of the tragedy. All families have personal loses which are commemorated at this time. A grandmother who died of a heart attack on the trains, an uncle who was shot for moving to slowly to the deportation trains, an aunt who died of malaria in the special settlements etc. The narratives provide graphic details of the hostile 'welcome' of the indigenous population of Uzbekistan upon arrival and then speak of the shame these populations later felt when they realized that they had fallen for unjustified, anti-Tatar propaganda.

The ritualized deportation narratives stressed the loyalty the Crimean Tatars continued to feel towards the Soviet government in spite of the unfair treatment they received in the special settlement camps and afterwards. In proclaiming this loyalty, the archetypal hero of the deportation narrative was a young Crimean Tatar soldier in the Red Army who is wounded while heroically defending the Soviet motherland. After demobilization from the front, the decorated soldier searches for his young wife and children and finally finds their unmarked graves in a village inhabited by native Uzbeks. In the exile narratives, the local villagers are ashamed to convey this defender of the Soviet homeland to the graves of his loved ones whom they might have saved. The local population, however, compensates for their previous mistreatment of the deported Tatars by sharing their bread with the exiles and reaffirming the two peoples' shared sense of Islamic identity. The story ends with a reaffirmation of the Crimean Tatars' determination to return to the land which was unjustly taken from them and a vow to reclaim their ancestral homes in the 'Green Isle' of the Crimea.

Lilia Bujurova, perhaps the most famous Crimean Tatar writer

[4] Not surprisingly, the Crimean Tatars' loyalty during the war is stressed and the role of Nazi collaborators downplayed or completely ignored in the family stories.

and poetess to emerge from the exile period, had her poems of the Crimean homeland published throughout the former Soviet Union during the *glasnost* period and deals with this subject in several. She captures her experience growing up in Central Asia hearing stories of The Deportation and her lost homeland in the following poem entitled 'Speak' *(Govori)*.

> Speak father speak,
> Speak until the dusk!
> Speak of the cruel war,
> Speak of the terrible day,
> In my veins let the tragedy flow,
> How salty is the sea water,
> Don't spare me, don't leave anything out,
> Go again out of your native home,
> Again lose your relatives on the wagons
> Again count who remains among the living!
> I want to know about everything,
> So that I can tell it to your grandchildren,
> Your pain cries to me,
> I will bring every moment to life in them!
> It will also become a homeland for them
> The word 'Homeland' and the word 'Crimea'!
> Speak father speak,
> Speak father until the dusk![5]

Most Crimean Tatars remember growing up in Central Asia with stories of the Crimean *vatan* and many recall having developed images and mental 'maps' of a homeland most had never seen. All Crimean Tatar children heard stories from the Crimea of the Salgir River, legends of Çadir Dağ, tales of the Bahçesaray's beauty and idealized narratives of such terraced Yaliboyu villages as Yalta, Uskut, Tarak Taş, Alushta, and Dere Köy. A typical Crimean Tatar source, for example, recalls "Everyone dreamed of his village in the Crimea, his birthplace and no one wanted to believe that the homeland had been lost for ever."[6]

[5] Lilia Bujurova. "Govori" *Tak eto Bylo. Natsional'nye Repressi v SSSR 1919-1952 gody*. vol. 3. Moscow; Pisan. 1993. p. 122.

[6] *Emel. Staty i Dokumenty ob Istorii, Literature i Kulture Krymskikh Tatar*. New York; Fund Krym. 1978. p. 43. Occasional references in Soviet textbooks to the 'Gem of the USSR,' the beautiful All-Union Crimean resort, may have served to further reinforce this romanticized image of the Crimea for new generations of exiles and to facilitate the construction of imaginary ties to this land in the minds of exiles who had never actually seen the Crimea.

Not surprisingly, a similar phenomenon has been noticed among the children of displaced Palestinians. A visitor to Palestinian refugee camps has written "when I had talked with other Palestinians in other camps in Jordan and Lebanon, I began to realize the depth of their sentiment for their former homes and lands. Children who had been born in camps talked of 'home' as though they knew every inch of ground, every tree and bush."[7]

A typical Crimean Tatar repatriate to the Crimea from Central Asia described the trans-generational 'rooting' of Crimean Tatar identity in the Crimea as follows "Around the family table, every day we talked about coming back here. We were raised on the idea of motherland."[8] Another Crimean Tatar source claimed "among the Crimean Tatars not a single action, great or small, took place during visits to houses among friends and acquaintances, during the entire deportation period, without recollections of the Crimea, of the land on which our parents, grandfathers and great grandfathers lived and worked."[9] A Crimean Tatar who was 2 years old during the deportation claimed "Every Crimean Tatar child had it drummed into his head that he had a homeland" while another explained the importance of the Crimea in nationalistic terms saying "Most children say 'mama' or 'papa' as their first word. Our children said *'Krym'*, the word for Crimea."[10] There is no doubt that the family played the primary role in preserving an imaginary territorial link to the Crimean *vatan* during the long years of exile when assimilation would have proven the easiest option for a people still known as 'traitors to the homeland.'

There were, in addition to the trans-generational narratives of the Crimea, also several external factors that helped the Crimean Tatars keep their distinct national identity alive during the half century of Central Asian exile. Perhaps one of the most interesting causes for the lack of assimilation among the Crimean Tatars in Central Asia stems from the overlooked differences between the Crimean Tatars and the indigenous Central Asian populations. Due to their

[7] David Waines. *A Sentence of Exile. The Palestine/ Israel Conflict, 1897-1977.* Wilmette, Illinois, The Medina Press, 1977. p. 117

[8] *The Crimean Review.* vol. VII. Special Issue. 1995. p. 37.

[9] B.L. Finogeev et. al. *Krymskotatarskie Zhenshchiny: Tryd, Byt, Traditsii.* Simferopol; Crimean State Committee for National Affairs. 1994. p. 15.

[10] Reuters. "Thousands in Ukraine Mark Date of Expulsion, Crimean Tatars Reunite for a 50th Anniversary." *Boston Globe.* May 19, 1994. p. 3.

comparatively long history of exposure to Russians and Western nationalism, the Crimean Tatars were among the most Europeanized and nationally developed Muslim groups in the Soviet Union. While many Uzbek and Tajik men, for example, continued throughout the Soviet period to don Muslim skull caps, wear *khalats* (the traditional robes of Central Asia), shave their heads, and grow beards (traditional outward forms of expressing Muslim identity) the Russified Crimean Tatars dressed much as the Russians did and, in many subtle ways, behaved similarly to the Russians.

In my interviews with Crimean Tatars who survived the deportation, most stress the relative backwardness of the Uzbeks and other Central Asians and, to many exiles, the deportation from the Crimea to Central Asia was more than a deportation from one continent to another, it was a journey back in time. Gavin Hambly described Soviet Central Asia as "the most backward of all Muslim regions in the empire" and, to the Crimean Tatars who were settled among the suspicious Uzbek villagers, this was truly an alien land.[11] While veils, *kalems* (bride prices), polygamy, traditional Muslim attire and many other aspects of Crimean Muslim life had long ago fallen into disuse among the Europeanized Crimean Tatars, the old traditions of conservative Central Asian Islam continued in the *kişlaks* of Uzbekistan (especially in the Fergana Valley) throughout the Soviet period. In her description of the social conditions found in Uzbekistan during the 1960s, for example, Elizabeth Bacon wrote:

> Such Uzbek regions as Samarkand, Surkhan Darya, and Khiva appear to be as conservative as Tajikistan. In these regions polygamy is widespread, women cover their faces in the presence of men, and husbands often refuse to allow their wives to be treated by a male doctor. Even in Tashkent some *paranjas* (veils) are seen on the streets, while in Fergana, according to reports, active Party members often go into seclusion after marriage.[12]

By comparison, the veil had fallen into disuse among Crimean Tatar women by the late 19th century and had never been prevalent among the coastal Tats and Nogais. Women also played a considerable role in the reform and national movement of the Crimean Tatars and it should be remembered that women had been granted the right to vote by the Crimean *Kurultay* as early as 1917.

[11] Gavin Hambly *Central Asia.* London; Dell Publishers. 1969. p. 242.

[12] Elizabeth Bacon. *Central Asians Under Russian Rule.* Ithaca; Cornell Univ. 1966. p. 172.

These seemingly trivial societal differences between the Crimean Tatars and their new neighbors (whose culture reflected many of the ancient traditions of their land in much the same way the Crimean Tatars' did) certainly contributed to their lack of assimilation once the exiles had been released from the special settlement regime. Similarly, while the hospitality of the Central Asians is legendary, they and the Crimean Tatars also tend towards endogamy and this further contributed to the maintenance of Crimean Tatar national identity in Central Asia. After the initial years of the deportation there was very little intermarriage between Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kazakhs and Kirghiz on the one hand and Crimean Tatars on the other, and this appears to have been a result of mutual traditions. With an endogamy rate of 91% the Crimean Tatars were in fact among the most endogamous nations in the Soviet Union. As many threatened peoples do, the Crimean Tatars appear to have had a desire to preserve their community and prevent their sons and daughters from loosing their identity through intermarriage with the indigenous peoples of Central Asia. For their part, the Tajiks and Uzbeks of the *mahallas* (traditional neighborhoods) and villages of Central Asia also frowned on marriage with outsiders.

Another phenomena which contributed to the maintenance of Crimean Tatar identity in Central Asia included the regime's discrimination against the Crimean Tatars. Had the Crimean Tatar people been given full political rights and recognition of their ethnicity they might not have been so vigilant in actively defending their endangered national identity. As in many areas of the world, Walker Connor points out that state sponsored attempts to suppress or eradicate national identities usually have the opposite effect and result in a defensive heightening of a people's sense of national awareness. While it was possible to assimilate ethnic groups *prior* to the advent of the political phenomenon of nationalism, Connor claims "No examples of significant assimilation are offered which have taken place since the advent of the age of nationalism."[13]

Although the Soviet government granted the Crimean Tatars token cultural opportunities and outlets for expression after their release from the camps in 1957 (for example, it allowed the publishing of a Crimean Tatar language paper known as *Lenin Bayragi*-Lenin's

[13] Walker Connor. "Nation-Building or Nation Destroying?" *World Politics*. vol. XXI. Oct. 1971-July 1972. p 350.

Banner and a journal known as *Yildiz* -The Star) this could hardly satisfy this exiled people's aspirations for full ethno-national expression of the sort found during the *korenizatsiia* period. These limited mediums made available to the Crimean Tatars did, however, provide this diaspora people with an additional vehicle for preventing assimilation in Central Asia. The end sections of *Lenin Bayragi*, for example, had columns of Crimean Tatar words and their translation in Russian to help an increasingly Russified generation of Crimean Tatar exiles (who received no schooling in the Crimean Tatar language) preserve their language.[14]

The Political Mobilization of Crimean Tatar Ethnicity in Central Asia

Having sustained their ethno-national identity in Uzbekistan and elsewhere (many Crimean Tatars in Siberia migrated to Uzbekistan to be with friends and relatives after 1957) in the first two decades of exile, it was not surprising that the Crimean Tatars took advantage of the gradual post-Stalin thaw in the USSR to begin agitation for a return to the Crimea in the mid-1960s. The 1957 decree allowing the Chechens, Ingush, Karachai, Balkars and Kalmyks to return to their reconstituted republics, but forbidding the Crimean Tatars from doing the same, had disillusioned a whole generation of Crimean Tatars who had earlier believed in working within the framework of the Soviet system to achieve their goal of repatriation. The feelings of shock and disappointment among the Crimean Tatars were profound and a generation that had grown up in exile always believing in the reversible nature of their exile began to devise a new strategy to fulfill their goal of returning to the Crimea.

As their identity as a people continued to be suppressed the Crimean Tatars' growing frustration was summed up by one Crimean Tatar who claimed "Who are we now, nobodies living nowhere."[15] The Crimean Tatars' shared sense of injustice and their growing frustration with the Kremlin gradually fostered the rise of a mass 'Return to the Homeland' movement among this dispersed people. In a

[14] Azade-Ayshe Rorlich. 'One or More Tatar Nations?' *Muslim Communities Reemerge. Historical Perspectives on Nationality, Politics, and Opposition in the Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia*. ed. Edward Allworth. Durham; Duke Univ. Press, 1994 p. 72.

[15] Svetlana Alieva *Tak eto Bylo*. Moscow; Pisan. 1993. p. 90

remarkable display of organizational and national unity, Crimean Tatar activists began to form action committees in all the places of their exile that worked to mobilize their people politically, keep their culture alive and forge greater national solidarity. All of these activities had the long term aim of pressuring the Kremlin into allowing for the full repatriation of the Crimean Tatar people.

Far from witnessing the destruction of the Crimean Tatar ethnos, the 1960s thus witnessed the rise of a greater sense of cohesion and national activism among the deportees as their shared sense of grievance provided a platform for political mobilization. In Uzbekistan, in particular, initiative groups were formed at the grass roots level which were organized to pressure both local authorities and the Kremlin into politically rehabilitating the Crimean Tatars and allowing for their return to the Crimea.[16] In this fashion, the Crimean Tatar nationalists issued the first ethnically-based, frontal challenge to the Soviet regime since World War II. Operating from 1957 to 1989, the Crimean Tatar return movement was also to be the longest running dissident challenge to the Kremlin in Soviet history and was to be matched only by the Jewish emigration movement in its longevity. This movement was, however, to take a heavy toll on this people and hundreds of Crimean Tatar activists and dissidents were arrested and given lengthy jail terms in the *Gulag* during the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

Although the Crimean Tatars had, by the 1960s, tenaciously overcome the previous political and socio-economic obstacles confronting their people in their places of exile (in most instances the the hard working Crimean Tatars had by this time surpassed their Central Asian hosts in educational and economic terms), many continued to agitate for a return to a lost territory still defined as a homeland. Contemporary accounts point out that an increasingly broad base of the Crimean Tatar exile population had become involved in the struggle to return by the 1960s. In one mass petition to the Twenty Third Party Congress, for instance, more than 120,000 Crimean Tatars, virtually the whole adult population, took the decided risk of signing a document requesting the rehabilitation and repatriation of their nation.[17] Communist authorities in the normally quiescent Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan began to fear the ripple effect that the Crimean Tatars' unprecedented challenge to the regime would have on the surrounding Uzbek population.[18]

[16] According to Ludmilla Alexeyeva's account of the movement during the 1970s "Any Crimean Tatar who wished could join. Within a city, street groups informed the city group of their activities; the city group in turn informed the area group; the area group informed the republic group." Ludmilla Alexeyeva. *Soviet Dissent. Contemporary Movements for National, Religious, and Human Rights.* Middleton Conn; Wesleyan Univ. Press. 1985 p. 140.

Finally, on July 21, 1967, a committee of Crimean Tatar representatives headed by the prominent dissident Ayshe Seytmuartova and several others, from a group of 400 who had been lobbying in Moscow itself, was granted permission to meet in the Kremlin with several high ranking Soviet officials, including KGB chairman Yuri Andropov.[19] In one of the most improbable events in modern Soviet history, the representatives of this small "non-nation" of perhaps a third of a million souls confronted the most powerful officials in the Soviet state and demanded redress for the wrongs accumulated by their people over the previous 23 years. After a surprisingly accommodating session, the Crimean Tatar representatives returned to their communities in Central Asia believing that their people would soon be rehabilitated and the issue of their return to the Crimea would be addressed. After two tense months, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet finally released a decree in September 1967 formally absolving the Crimean Tatars of the accusations of mass betrayal during World War II and granting them greater rights in the USSR.

As important as this exoneration was in exculpating the Crimean Tatars on the false charges of 'mass treason' the second part of the decree revealed the Kremlin's true stance on the most important of the Crimean Tatars' national demands...the right return to the Crimean homeland. The carefully worded decree claimed that "citizens of Tatar nationality who had formerly been living in the Crimea have taken root in the territory of the Uzbek and other Union

[17] Bohdan Nahylo and Ann Sheehy. *The Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans and Meskhetians. Soviet Treatment of Some National Minorities.* London; Minority Rights Group. 1971.p 14.

[18] David Kowalewski. *National Dissent in the Soviet Union: The Crimean Tatar Case.* Washington D.C. U.S. State Dept. 1977. p. 13. This United States of America State Department report pointed out that the Crimean Tatar protest movement had a "certain demonstrative effect upon minority nationalities in Central Asia and elsewhere."

[19] Ayshe Seytmuratova emigrated to the United States in the late 1970s were she received political asylum and, from this time period onwards, acted as the Crimean Tatars' international spokesperson.

Republics" and there "they enjoy all the rights of Soviet citizens."[20] With the stroke of a pen the Crimean Tatars' dream of returning to their homeland had been once again crushed and instead they were said to have spontaneously 'taken root' *(ukorenilis')* in Uzbekistan. In addition, the very existence of the *Crimean* Tatar nationality had been refuted by the wording of the decree which referred not to the 'Crimean Tatars' but to the 'Tatars who had formerly been living in the Crimea.'

From this time forward the Crimean Tatars of Central Asia were, for all official purposes,(i.e. passports, censuses etc.), considered to be a sub-section of the Volga Tatars.[21] The real meaning of this decree was clear for all to see for, as Alan Fisher pointed out, "a people without a nationality has no homeland to which to return."[22] After twenty years of mass-based nationalization during the *korenizatsiia* period, which saw the construction of the Crimean Tatars as the 'primordial, rooted people' in the Crimean Peninsula, the Soviet government had apparently reversed itself and hit upon the idea of 'de-rooting' this nation and simply transplanting it in Central Asia by administrative caveat.

Had the Kremlin given careful consideration to the importance of the Crimean homeland as the foundation for the Crimean Tatars' diasporic identity they would have, however, foreseen that this decree would not placate this increasingly assertive people. While the nationally undeveloped Chechen highlanders had, by comparison, organized themselves into *tariqats* (religious brotherhoods) or *teyips* (clans) and strengthened their unofficial *sufi* (mystical) version of Islam in order to avoid assimilation in exile, the increasingly urbanized and secular Crimean Tatar deportees had instinctively rallied around the concept of their Soviet homeland to preserve their distinct ethno-national identity in their places of exile.[23]

[20] Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia. *Krymsko-Tatarskoe Natsional' noe Dvizhenie. Istoria, Problemy, Perspektivy*. Moscow; Rossikaia Akademiia Nauk. 1992. p. 112.

[21] There was a large Volga Tatar diaspora in Central Asia formed over the previous century by migration to this region. The Volga Tatars were much more mobile than the Crimean Tatars and for over a century served as trading intermediaries between the Central Asian peoples and Russia.

[22] Alan Fisher. *The Tatars of the Crimea*. Stanford; Hoover Institution Press. 1978. p. 180.

[23] O.A. Sukhareva. *Islam v Uzbekistane*. Tashkent; Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoi SSR. 1960. pp. 52-53.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that the Crimean Tatar national movement developed into a uniquely territorialized movement with repatriation as its main goal. Other issues on the nationalist agenda were considered of secondary importance to the main task of regaining the Crimean homeland. It was felt by the increasingly organized Crimean Tatar leadership that issues such as the maintenance of Crimean Tatar language, culture and identity could be solved only within a restored Crimean ASSR.

The idea of regaining the lost Crimean homeland continued to provide the main foundation for the maintenance of a separate national identity for the exiled Crimean Tatars who actively resisted assimilation into the surrounding Central Asian milieu and refused to accept the Uzbek SSR (or any other people's Soviet republic) as their homeland. Azade Ayse Rorlich succinctly summed up the importance of the Crimea to these exiles claiming "The struggle for their homeland is at the center of their struggle to endure as a nation. It unfolds the twin banners of political activism and cultural assertiveness."[24] This attitude among the Crimean Tatars owed some of its origin to the deeply ingrained belief in all Soviet citizens that national groups 'belonged to' their titular republic or autonomy and could not legitimately express their identity in another nationality's republic.[25]

The Chirchik Riots and the Radicalization of the Return Movement

The tension resulting from failed expectations of return among the Crimean Tatar community of Central Asia came to head in the year 1968, in the city of Chirchik, located thirty kilometers to the north east of the Uzbek SSR capital Tashkent in the foothills of the Chaktal mountains. Chirchik, an industrial town in which a large Crimean Tatar population had been settled during the deportations, was typical of many of the Uzbek factory towns in which the Tatars found themselves after 1944. Chrichik's large population of Crimean Tatar factory workers was also among the most restive in the places of exile and it is not surprising that the first outbreak of mass dissent among the Crimean Tatars took place here.

[24] Azade-Ayse Rorlich. op. cit. no. 14. p. 69

[25] This sort of collective attachment to a homeland-republic was an obvious result of decades of exposure to *korenizatsiia*.

According to eye witnesses, several thousand Crimean Tatars from the neighboring communities drove to this city and met in the central park of Chirchik to celebrate Lenin's 98th birthday on April 21, 1968 (Lenin was seen as a supporter of Crimean Tatar nationhood and was adopted as a national hero by the exiled Tatars) and the traditional May festival of *Tepreş*.[26] In spite of its innocent appearance, this gathering turned into a protest against the unsatisfactory nature of the recent decree and the authorities quickly moved in to arrest the protesters.[27] As the rally progressed, MVD (Ministry of Interior Affairs) and para-military divisions from the surrounding areas converged on the Crimean Tatars in a resounding display of force. Police units attacked the protesters with poisonous spray, batons, and high pressure hoses, and arrested more than 300 Crimean Tatars in the subsequent melee.[28]

In the aftermath of this event, Crimean Tatar activists smuggled news of the attack to the West and, in this fashion, many in the West heard word of the exiled Crimean Tatars for the first time in over two decades. The whole event was in fact a public relations coup for the struggling Crimean Tatars and the first major post-World War II ethnic disturbance in the normally quiescent Central Asian republics.[29]

Similar outbreaks of violence also occurred among restive Crimean Tatar populations in the Uzbek cities of Bekabad, Andijan, Fergana and in Tashkent proper during this period and there seemed to be no end in sight to the Crimean Tatars' agitation. The growing intensity of the Crimean Tatars' struggle may have had to do with Khrushchev's increasing emphasis on calls for *slianiie* (the 'blending' of nationalities) and *sblizheniie* ('rapprochement' between the peoples of the Soviet Union) which was seen by most national minorities as a byword for Russification. As a people without a state sanctioned homeland-republic, the Crimean Tatars felt themselves to be particularly vulnerable to losing their ethno-national identity through this policy of Sovietization.

[26] Other sources claim it was the festival of *Derviza*.

[27] Interviewees in Chirchik informed the author that the local Uzbek mayor, who spoke Crimean Tatar in order to communicate with the large Crimean Tatar population of Chirchik, did not order the subsequent attack on the peaceful protesters. Rather it was MVD commandeers from nearby areas.

[28] Peter Potichnyj. 'The Struggle of the Crimean Tatars.' *Canadian Slavonic Papers*. vol. XVII. no. 2-3. p. 315 .

[29] The next major national disturbance occurred 18 years later during the widely reported Alma Ata riots of 1986 in Kazakhstan.

In this environment, the Crimean Tatar activists became increasingly outspoken in their calls for a return to their Crimean homeland as a means for preserving their identity. In 1969 during a May Day parade in Tashkent, for example, a group of bold Crimean Tatars unfurled a banner which read "The Crimean Tatars have been in exile for twenty five years—Communists! Return our people to their Homeland" and hundreds of Crimean Tatars began protesting at the trials of well known activists. The Crimean Tatars throughout Central Asia also made a point of commemorating the anniversary of the disbanding of the Crimean ASSR.

Perhaps the most noteworthy effort to overcome the effects of the 1967 decree was the mass uncontrolled migration of Crimean Tatars back to the Crimea in the following years. The attempt by many Crimean Tatars to return to the Crimea without the permission of the authorities resulted in the re-deportation of as many as 6,000 Crimean Tatars in 1968 alone. As the Crimea was a All-Union health resort with a strict passport regime it was easy for the local authorities to deport Crimean Tatars who did not have residence permits in their passports. There were many tragedies at this time as the local Crimean militia forces attacked Crimean Tatar squatter camps and forcefully transported Crimean Tatars beyond the borders of the Crimea. During this period there were, for example, at least 3 reported cases of protest related self-immolation among the Crimean Tatars. The tragic self-immolation of Musa Mahmut in particular became known to Crimean Tatars everywhere. Having returned with his family to settle in the Crimean *oblast* without the permission of the Crimean authorities, Musa Mahmut was repeatedly harassed, arrested by Crimean officials, refused a job and on several occasions his house was attacked.

Finally, when the police came to deport his family back to Central Asia for not possessing *propisky* (official residence permits) for the Crimea, a desperate Musa Mahmut poured gasoline on himself and set himself on fire. When news of Musa Mahmut's tragic death was carried back to Central Asia he became a modern *Milli Şehit* (National Martyr) for his people and the story of his and his nation's suffering at the hands of the Soviets was told in a *samizdat* (underground 'self-publication') work by Reshat Dzhemilev which was smuggled to the USA and published by the American Crimean Tatar

diaspora in New York.[30] The funeral of Musa Mahmut in the Crimea was also a scene of protest for other desperate Crimean Tatars who gathered for the event despite police efforts to prevent a protest action commemorating Mahmut's death.

In light of events such as Musa Mahmut's death and the continuing arrests of Crimean Tatar activists, an increasing number of Crimean Tatars became involved in the struggle for their homeland by defending friends and neighbors who had been arrested for opposing their continued exile. This was not, however, a spontaneous outburst of frustration, as in the case of the Palestinian *intifada*. The Crimean Tatars strictly abstained from violence, their activists skillfully manipulated Soviet law to demonstrate the illegality of their continued exile and the leaders of the movement were highly educated white collar workers. Time and time again the trials of Crimean Tatar nationalist became forums for eloquent dissidents to disseminate their message demanding the right to return to their homeland to wider audiences.

Perhaps the most important show trial of Crimean Tatar dissidents during this period was the sentencing of the 'Tashkent Ten,' a group of dissidents that included Izzet Khairov, Rolland Kadiev, Ismail Yaziciev, Riza Omerev, Reshat Bayramev, Munire Halil, Svetlina Ahmet, Haydar Bariev, Ridvan Gafarev and Ruslan Eminev. Soon thereafter Ayshe Seytmuartova was sentenced for "slandering the Soviet system" and in 1973 a combative Reshat Dzhemilev was sentenced for attacking the Soviet system which had exiled his people after publicly labeling it a "totalitarian regime."[31]

[30] Musa Mahmut's grave in the village of Beş Terek between Simferopol and Karasu Bazar-Belogorsk has recently been topped by a monument to his sacrifice and, in the process, a national hero has been constructed by the reconstituted Crimean Tatar nation. Greta Uehling. "Squatting, Self-Immolation, and the Repatriation of the Crimean Tatars." *Nationalities Papers*. vol. 28. no. 2. 2000. pp. 317-41.

[31] Alan Fisher. op. cit. no. 22. pp. 191-192. In an interview with Izzet Khairov in Tashkent this source claimed that he and the other members of the Tashkent Ten and an earlier student organization had underestimated the ability of the KGB to infiltrate and move against their group. From this time forward the Crimean Tatars tended to avoid the creation of easily identifiable organizations which could be broken up by the authorities.

The Case of Mustafa Dzhemilev

Perhaps the dissident most representative of this new parallel leadership among the Crimean Tatars was a leader from Yangi Yul (Tashkent vicinity) named Mustafa Dzhemilev. Dzhemilev earned a Mandela-like status among Central Asians for his heroic, three decade long struggle to see his nation returned to its homeland.[32] Dzhemilev, a physically unimposing man who still suffers from health problems resulting from his 16 years spent in prison and labor camps, was exemplary of a new generation of average Crimean Tatars who made great personal sacrifices to bring about the return of their nation to its ancestral lands.

Dzhemilev was initially sentenced to prison in 1966 for his 'anti-Soviet' activities and upon release from prison joined with other famous Soviet dissidents, such as Andrei Sakharov, to form the 'Initiative Group for the Defense of Human Rights in the USSR.' Such activities earned the unrepentant Dzhemilev 5 more sentences (including one hard labor sentence) over the next two decades. Dzhemilev used his sentencings to bring attention to his people's plight and on one occasion went on a widely publicized 275 day hunger strike.

Dzhemilev also used his trials as a platform for issuing fiery speeches denouncing Soviet policies towards his people and calling for a return to "correct Leninist policies." In these speeches the "illegal" dissolution of the Crimean ASSR and the 46% mortality rate of the Crimean Tatar deportees were constantly evoked. When asked the place of his birth during trials, Dzhemilev always made a point of stating "the Crimean ASSR" much to the chagrin of the state prosecutors who refused to acknowledge that the Crimea had ever been an autonomous republic. When asked if he had any prior arrests or sentences during his first trial in Uzbekistan, a young Dzhemilev answered in the affirmative and claimed he had been sentenced without a trial as an infant to a life of exile in Central Asia.

Dzhemilev was released from jail in 1988 (due in part to pressure from US President Ronald Reagan) at a time when the informal Crimean Tatar 'Action Groups,' made up of Crimean Tatar activist cells throughout Central Asia and other places of exile, were beginning to take advantage of the Gorbachev thaw and openly

[32] For more on Dzhemilev see, Brian Glyn Williams. "Mustafa Jemilev." *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*. vol. 2. ed. Alexander Motyl. Academic Press. 2000.

organize. In light of his growing reputation beyond Central Asia, it was not surprising that the newly organized Organization of the Crimean Tatar National Movement (OCTNM), which emerged in 1989, chose Dzhemilev as its first elected chairman.[33] Soon thereafter, Dzhemilev migrated to the Crimea in 1989 and was recognized in the second Crimean *Kurultay* (Congress) in June of 1991 for his sacrifices on the behalf of his people and officially given the honorary title, Kirimoglu...'The Son of the Crimea.'[34] This historic *Kurultay* (the first held by the Crimean Tatars on Crimean soil since 1917) was pointedly known by its organizers as the *Second Kurultay* to stress continuity with the first Crimean Tatar government crushed by the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War. In this *Kurultay* Dzhemilev-Kirimoglu was also elected chairman of the *Mejlis*, the permanent 33 member parallel government or governing assembly of the *Kurultay*.

Mustafa Dzhemilev Kirimoglu has been eloquently described as a 'Moses leading his people back to the Promised Land' and one must know this extraordinary man in order to understand the Crimean Tatar national movement.[35] In my 1997 interviews with Dzhemilev, I found that the youthful ardor of the fight for his people's repatriation had been replaced by a sobering realization of the formidable logistic, bureaucratic, financial, political and legal obstacles he and his people must confront as they attempt to reestablish themselves in a generally unwelcoming post-Soviet Crimea.

Dzhemilev, who lived in a modest, vine-covered house guarded by one bodyguard on a hillside overlooking Bahçesaray, was plagued with unexpected problems at the time of my visit. This tireless scourge

[33] The Organization of the Crimean Tatar National Movement was the first Crimean Tatar political movement since the disbanding of the Milli Firka by the Soviets. This organization was, for a brief time, challenged by Yuri Osmanov's less popular Crimean Tatar National Movement (CTNM) which sought to compromise with the authorities. This opposition organization collapsed with the assassination of Yuri Osmanov, a well known Soviet dissident, in November 1993.

[34] There has been an interesting re-Tatarization of names among the Crimean Tatars since the fall of the USSR. Dzhemilev, for example, is now often known Abdulcemil or Cemiloglu (all three mean the son of Cemil or Dzhemil).

[35] Dzhemilev is now a member of the Ukrainian parliament in conjunction with the Ukrainian nationalist party *Rukh* which has shown itself to be very supportive of the Crimean Tatars' struggle for rights in the post-Soviet Ukraine. The close ties between *Rukh* and the Crimean Tatars stem from the friendship between Viacheslav Chornovil (the former leader of the party) and Dzhemilev, a result of their shared past as political prisoners fighting for their respective people's rights.

of state prosecutors, the KGB, militia men and the Communist *nomenklatura* (bureaucratic elite) had suddenly found himself confronted with the most daunting challenges of his career. Unforeseen hurdles appeared in every direction and many of them now came from his own people. Dzhemilev's detractors cast accusations that he had been misusing the funds in a newly formed Crimean Tatar financial organization known as *Imdat Bank*; the old 'veterans' of the movement, such as Reshat Dzhemilev and Ayshe Seytmuartova complained to me of his imperious ways; a fraction in the *Mejlis* (Crimean Tatar parliament) headed by Lilia Bujurova, Izzet Khairov and others was maneuvering to oust him from power; and thousands of Crimean Tatars living in what can best be described as squatter camps were counting on 'The Son of the Crimea' to provide them with Ukrainian citizenship, bring electricity and water to their settlements, and help in repatriating loved ones from Central Asia.

Calm, soft-spoken and prematurely aged by his long incarceration in the *Gulag*, Dzhemilev downplayed his years spent in Soviet prisons and dismissed the recent difficulties since arriving in the Crimea as typical examples of perpetual Crimean Tatar in-fighting. With a wave of his cigarette stained hand one of the most widely known Soviet-era dissidents in the West remarked:

> The KGB underestimated our people's determination during this early period, it was the unity forged during the 1960s and 1970s that allowed us to bring the people here when the conditions were right. It is this sense of unity that we developed in Central Asia that will allow us to rebuild our lives from the ground up here as our parents did in Uzbekistan after the war. There is something in the Crimean Tatar spirit that allows us to survive.[36]

Far from quelling the Crimean Tatars' Homeland Movement, the repeated arrests of Dzhemilev and scores of other activists whose names are unrecorded, deepened the average Crimean Tatars' sense of grievance and instilled in this people the sense of unity of purpose to which Dzhemilev referred in our interviews. The clamp down on the Crimean Tatar movement in fact appears to have actually increased the involvement of the average Crimean Tatar in the political movement.[37] Local Uzbek officials trying to quash the grow-

[36] Interview with Mustafa Dzhemilev. Bahçesaray, Crimea. Nov. 1997.

[37] An outspoken Soviet general from the Ukraine who was sympathetic to the Crimean Tatars' cause, Peter Grigorenko, once claimed "Despite their expectations, the punitive actions of the authorities called forth still greater political ac-

ing Crimean Tatar movement found themselves confronted with a hydra. The arrest of one leader led to the rise of new organizers who were even harder to track. For Soviet leaders who discounted the significance of the Soviet Union's internal republican borders and genuinely believed in the eventual rapprochement of Soviet nations (such as the future president Mikhail Gorbachev), the actions of Soviet citizens of Crimean Tatar background were incomprehensible. One frustrated Soviet official asked:

> Why cannot Uzbekistan be a homeland for representatives of all nationalities living here? Why do they consider that only the Crimean Peninsula is their homeland, and that it belongs only to them? The Soviet Union is the homeland of all Soviet nations and national groups. National boundaries within this common homeland are relative, and with the development of productive forces these boundaries can and should change.[38]

Soviet Attempts to Find a Territorial Solution to the 'Crimean Tatar Problem'

While the Soviet authorities did manage, to a certain degree, to decapitate the Crimean Tatar national movement through a series of arrests beginning in 1969 and continuing until the mid 1970s, they appear to have realized that this people's aspirations could not be permanently muted by force. It was at this time that the Kremlin hit upon another solution that once again demonstrated its true lack of understanding of the real importance of an emotional link between a territory constructed as a homeland and a nation that considered itself to have been forged upon this territory.

Beginning in the early 1980s, the Soviet authorities began a project to create an ersatz homeland for the Crimean Tatars in two sparsely inhabited Uzbek *raions* (administrative regions) in the dry steppe lands south of Samarkand and Bukhara. The undeveloped Mubarek and Baharistan *raions* located in the Kashka Darya *oblast* were selected as a region of special settlement for the Crimean Tatars in an attempt to divert their drive to return to the forbidden Crimea.

tivism on the part of the Crimean Tatar masses. The number of appeals and protests continued to grow." A monument to this supporter of the Crimean Tatars struggle has been built by the grateful returnees in Simferopol. Andrei Grigorenko. *A Kogda My Vernemsia.* New York; Fund Krym. 1977. p. 59.

[38] *A Chronicle of Human Rights in the USSR.* no.'s 5-6. Nov.-Dec. 1973. p. 32.

In my interviews with Mustafa Dzhemilev, this source informed me that Crimean Tatars who settled in the region were to receive schooling in their native tongue, were to be given prime administrative posts, would obtain preferential work treatment and would, in general, receive many of the benefits of state sponsored, positive discrimination (i.e. *korenizatsiia*) so long deprived them.[39] Uzbek authorities argued that much of the Crimean Tatars' national aspirations could in fact be filled in a new homeland to be known as the 'Mubarek Republic.' Crimean Tatar students graduating from Tashkent's Nizami Pedagogical Institute were ordered to move to the region in order to receive their diplomas and some Crimean Tatars who had been re-deported from the Crimea were also forcefully settled in this region. An all out effort was made at this time to attract Crimean Tatars from throughout Central Asia to settle in the Mubarek, Baharistan region.

Abdulla Balich, the Crimean Tatar Vice Rector of the Nizami Institute (one of the highest ranking Crimean Tatars in Uzbekistan) informed me, for example, that he was flown to the region and shown fully furnished houses, schools, administrative buildings etc. waiting for Tatar settlement in the city of Mubarek. He was then ordered to convince Crimean Tatar graduates to move to this ghost town and fulfill their 'socialist duty' in developing this region. This source claimed that he was, however, skeptical for in his words "This was the Uzbeks' homeland, and they would certainly be displeased to see their lands carved up for the creation of a homeland for another people."[40]

The majority of the Crimean Tatars appear to have agreed with Balich and the Crimean Tatars began a series of protests, sit-ins at the Nizami and other institutes, and marches designed to show their displeasure with the state's attempts to provide an unsatisfactory territorial solution to their national problem. One Crimean Tatar *samizdat* source summed up the Crimean Tatars' skepticism claiming "They probably propose that Crimean Tatars, tempted by this 'carrot', would throng to the Qarshi steppes having forgotten about their native land, where institutions of higher learning in the native land existed many centuries before they appeared in Russia."[41]

[39] Interview with Mustafa Dzhemilev. Simferopol, Crimea. Nov. 1997.

[40] Interview with Abdullah Balich. Vice Rector Nizami Institute. Tashkent, Uzbekistan. April 1997.

[41] Edward Allworth. *The Tatars of the Crimea.* Durham; Duke University Press. 1988. pp. 347-348.

In their history of the Crimean Tatar national movement, Guboglo and Chervonnaia state that "Any attempt to reconcile the Crimean Tatars with their status quo, to settle them in other republics or to search for means for their rebirth on 'foreign' land was perceived as provocative and hostile to the fundamental interests of the nation."[42] Dissident leader Mustafa Dzhemilev and other Tatar nationalists in fact considered settlement in this region to be a betrayal of their people's desire to return to their native homeland and the few Tatars who moved to the Mubarek Republic were stigmatized as traitors to the national cause. Dzhemilev summed up his people's disposition at this time saying "..it was completely clear to all Crimean Tatars that they had the prospect to revive their national culture in their Homeland, and that only there could they survive as a distinct people...For the Crimean Tatars, there was no Homeland other that the Crimea."[43] Interestingly enough, when all was said and done, most Crimean Tatars considered the whole Mubarek project to have been nothing more than another scheme by the crafty Uzbekistan SSR party boss, Sharaf Rashidov, to fleece Moscow of money for the development of a backward Uzbek region!

The failure of the 'Mubarek Republic' to gain adherents among the Crimean Tatars has many parallels with the failure of the Kremlin's attempts to convince Soviet Jews to settle in their artificially created Jewish homeland-republic in the Soviet Far East, known as Birobidzhan, or the failed British attempts to create a Jewish homeland in Uganda in 1908. The failure of these related projects vividly demonstrates the importance of an emotional or imaginary link to a specific territory among a people or nation if this land is to be constructed as a "homeland."

One can only speculate on the problems that would have arisen between the Uzbeks and Crimean Tatars in post-Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan if this exiled people had indeed accepted some sort of autonomy on Uzbek soil. For the most part relations were in fact cordial between the common Uzbeks and Crimean Tatars during the exile period and the Mubarek scheme did not have chance to damage this stable relationship. In my interviews in Uzbekistan, I found the Uzbeks to be generally sympathetic to the Crimean Tatars'

[42] Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia. op cit. no. 20. p. 95.
[43] Mustafa Dzhemilev. "The Crimean Tatars' Thorny Path to their Homeland." *Central Asia. The Rediscovery of History*. ed. H.B. Paksoy. Armonk NY; M.E. Sharpe. 1994. pp. 171-172.

plight and to have respected this people who were often described by the Russians and Uzbeks as *trudolyubivii* (hard working). Although Uzbek party officials were known for clamping down on the Crimean Tatars' nationalist agitators, some members of the Uzbek intelligentsia supported the exiles. Uzbek writer, Temir Pulatov, for example, showed his support for the Crimean Tatars during the Gorbachev period writing:

> They were able to survive with the understanding and sympathy of the native Uzbek and Kazakh populations which, in spite of the scorn and severity of the Stalinist officials, did not once in word or deed hurt the settlers, but made room for them not only at their hearths but on their land and territory. In spite of the total Stalinesque propaganda about the 'enemy of the people' and the 'nation of traitors', (our people) understood that the Crimean Tatars were first of all hard workers, honorable and that they, like the Uzbeks, work for their daily bread with the sweat of their brow.[44]

The Return to the Homeland Movement

By the mid 1980s it became widely apparent that even Crimean Tatars who had never seen the Crimea had certainly not "taken root" in Central Asia in any sense. In fact thousands of Crimean Tatars had by this time begun to move to the Ukrainian provinces bordering the Crimea to the north, especially the Kherson *oblast,* or to the Krasnodar *Krai* (territory) in the neighboring Caucasus region of Russia, to position themselves closer to their cherished Black Sea homeland. In addition, Crimean authorities increasingly had to forcefully deport determined Crimean Tatar families attempting to settle in the Crimea. The majority of Crimean Tatars, it would seem, had never grown to accept Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan or Russia as homelands (despite their cultural similarities with the Uzbeks and others) and, unlike the Soviet Koreans and Uighurs, who were to be found in large numbers in Central Asia, they refused to consider these republics their permanent home. The Crimean Tatars adamantly refused to accept the Kremlin's assertion that the strategically located Crimea was already overcrowded with Slavs and holiday resorts and could not be dissuaded from their

[44] Temir Pulatov. "Vsem Mirom Pomoch' Brat'iam!" *Druzhba Narodov.* no. 2. 1988. p. 203.

ultimate objective, the physical repatriation of their *entire* people to their historic homeland.

What was truly astounding in retrospect was that the Crimean Tatars did not lose their collective determination to challenge the authorities during this period. The Crimean Tatars never put aside their objective of the physical return of their entire people to their ancestral lands in a real sense. While the Palestinians continued to publicly maintain a national mission of returning to their lost lands in the state of Israel many had, by contrast, come to see their people's return in the abstract and this was no longer seen as a realistic goal by the late 1970s and early 1980s.[45]

Although the Soviet state in comparison may have (from the comfortable position of hindsight) seemed destined to weaken and allow the Crimean Tatars to return, for those Crimean Tatars serving lengthy jail terms for merely agitating within the system for their people's right to return to the Crimea, the collapse of the all-powerful KGB, entrenched Soviet ruling elite and of the very totalitarian Soviet regime itself was simply unimaginable. It is easy today to underestimate the real risks these bold activists faced by directly confronting the awesome power of a police state with their demands for the 'right of return.' Crimean Tatar activists were still being arrested by the KGB in the late 1980s for such "seditious anti-Soviet" activities as sending appeals to the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey and the USA, launching protest marches in the Krasnodar region and conducting demonstrations in Moscow. As late as 1988 an article in *Pravda Vostoka* (Truth of the East) announced the sentencing of a Crimean Tatar national activist, Reshat Ablaev, for his efforts to establish contacts with Fikret Yurter and Memet Sevdiyar, leaders of the American Crimean Tatar diaspora who were described in the article in typical propagandist terms as "fascist extremists."[46] The self-sacrifices made by jailed activists, such as Rolan Kadiyev, Reshat Dzhemilev, Izzet Khairov, Ayshe Seytmuratova, Yuri Osmanov, Nariman Kadirov, Mustafa Dzhemilev and other dissidents on behalf of their people were in every respect tremendous.

The other two exiled groups remaining in Central Asia, the Volga Germans and Meshketian Turks, were in comparison much less active

[45] George Bishrat. "Displacement and Social Identity; Palestinian Refugees in the West Bank." *Population Displacement and Resettlement: Development and Conflict in the Middle East.* New York; Center for Migration Studies. 1994. p. 181.

[46] "Lozh' po Zakazy." *Pravda Vostoka.* Jan. 21. 1988.

in directly challenging the Soviet regime and more willing to compromise on the issue of repatriation to their former administrative homelands. By the 1970s movements had arisen among the Meshketian Turks calling for permission to emigrate to Turkey while the exiled Volga Germans had, by the 1980s, begun what was to become a mass migration to West Germany. This is not surprising when one considers that neither of these groups had experienced a strong national-territorial construction process during the late Imperial period nor had they come to imagine their administrative republics as a *Vaterland* or *vatan* during the 1920s and 1930s (although the Volga Germans did undergo *korenizatsiia* and some territorialization of identity, the heterogeneous Meshketian Turks had no titular territorial unit within the Georgian SSR). As 'Turks' many Meshketians in fact viewed Turkey as a homeland after spending a generation in exile while the Volga Germans considered themselves to be a diaspora of the larger *Volksdeutsche*.

The nationally-developed Crimean Tatars of Central Asia, by contrast, thought of themselves as uniquely 'Crimean' and never conceptualized Turkey as an 'alternative' homeland in spite of their ancestors' long history of Islamic migration to this land. One of the nine tactics adopted by the Crimean Tatar movement in its struggle for repatriation explicitly called on activists to "Eschew references to our Islamic faith, even though it is an important part of our national identity, and do not demand to emigrate to Turkey, that is, do not seek to follow the well-trodden path of our ancestors of the last two centuries."[47]

It should be stated here that the Crimean Tatars' drive for repatriation was not, however, simply based on nationalistic emotions. While the Crimean Tatar activists looked back to the days of the fabled Crimean Tatar Khanate (1443-1783) and their ancient pre-Mongol *koreny* (roots) in the Crimea to legitimize their historic claim to the Crimea, it is interesting to note that the *Leninshchina* (the period in which Lenin allowed national construction in the Crimean ASSR) was also considered a halcyon period and worthy of commemoration during meetings and rallies. This intense nostalgia for the period of the Crimean ASSR meant that emotional requests for the physical repatriation of the Crimean Tatar people to their cherished

[47] Edward Allworth. *Tatars of the Crimea. Return to the Homeland.* Durham; Duke Univ. Press. 1998 p. 198.

ancestral homeland were always combined with more pragmatic calls for the reconstitution of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic—with the Crimean Tatars as the obvious recipients of state sponsored, *korenizatsiia*-style affirmative action within "their" administrative unit.

The Crimean Tatars' comparatively obscure struggle for repatriation did not come to the attention of any but a few nationality specialists in the West until the advent of new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) began the process of ending much of the Brezhnev era's repression. By the late 1980s Soviet authorities began to allow the repatriation of several thousand Crimean Tatars who were known to be uninvolved in the national movement to return in organized levies known as *orgnabor* (organized labor).

I was shown several of the *kolkhozes* where these early state-sponsored settlers were given land in the Crimea by the Soviet government and they were all located in the dry Crimean steppe far from the more valuable southern land prized by the local Crimean Communist authorities and cherished in the Crimean Tatars' collective memory. Most of these settlers experienced considerable difficulty in a land that was markedly different from the coast and mountains of their youth or their second hand childhood stories of the Green Isle. With the breakdown of Soviet authority many of these early settlers, however, moved to buy houses and land to the south around Simferopol, Bahçesaray, Karasu Bazar (Belogrosk) and in villages in the northern foothills of the Yaila. These settlers proved to be a vanguard for the vast waves of Crimean Tatars returning after 1989.

This slow pace of settlement was, however, seen by the Crimean Tatar leadership as unsatisfactory and, taking advantage of the new political environment, in April 1987 approximately 2,000 Crimean Tatar activists launched their most daring call for repatriation yet by holding a bold protest in the heart of Moscow on Red Square itself. Here they were seen by Western tourists and journalists with banners reading "Motherland or Death." News of this unprecedented act, the largest mass demonstration in Red Square since the Russian Revolution, electrified the country. In response to this rally, which was reported throughout the world, the aging Soviet president Andrei Gromyko agreed to establish a commission to deal with the Crimean Tatars' demands. There can be little doubt that other nationalist movements and fronts that were at this time springing

up in the Baltic republics and Transcaucasus learned from the Crimean Tatars' successful methods of gaining the Kremlin's attention.

The Gromyko Commission, however, found that since the population of the Crimea had doubled since World War II, the Crimean Tatars needed to look at the situation in the Crimea 'in a realistic way' taking into account the interests of all peoples in the Crimea and give up their selfish, un-Soviet dreams of returning to the Crimea. While the commission emphasized that the Crimean Tatars had been unjustly accused of treason against the homeland, it continued to forbid their return to their homeland.

1989 and the Beginning of the Return Movement

By the year 1989, however, the situation in the USSR had changed dramatically as nationalist fronts appeared in the Baltics, radical nationalist movements that presaged war appeared in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and rising national movements arose throughout the USSR. In 1989 the Crimean Tatar singer Susana Memetova was permitted to sing on the central Moscow Television station and her song had a great symbolic impact among the Crimean Tatars in Central Asia. In her song Memetova asked "Why have our fountains been ruined? Why have our graves been destroyed" and ended by singing "I want to return to my homeland, but cannot find my way home."[48] In this environment of nationalist expression, openness and restructuring, the continued insistence on keeping the increasingly vocal Crimean Tatars in exile in Central Asia became untenable.

Events in Uzbekistan also vividly demonstrated the fact that non-Uzbeks were increasingly unwelcome in Uzbekistan. The Crimean Tatars' 45 year *modus vivendi* with the native Uzbek population was threatened by events which took place in the Fergana Valley in 1989. In June of 1989, Uzbeks in the Fergana Valley cities of Kuvasai, Margilan, Fergana and Kokand went on a rampage of violence which targeted another of the deported peoples forced to remain in exile, the Meshketian Turks.[49] Scores of Meshketians were killed in the

[48] This anecdote was relayed to the author by Nuri Shevkiev, Crimean Tatar settler. Marino, Crimea. Nov. 1997.

[49] "Pravda o Kuvasae" *Pravda Vostoka*. no. 137. June 11, 1989. p. 3.

violence, their homes were burnt and as many as 40,000 Meshketians were hurriedly evacuated from the republic by the Soviet government with a tremendous loss of property. While relations between the Meshketians and Uzbeks had not been as cordial as those between the Crimean Tatars and Uzbeks (the Meshketians were often stereotyped as 'Caucasian mafiosi,' for example) few had expected such a savage outbreak of violence and a wave of panic swept over all non-Uzbek minorities in Uzbekistan.

Although the Crimean Tatars were not directly targeted in the violence, Mustafa Dzhemilev informed the author that several members of his nation were killed by the Uzbek mobs and many Crimean Tatars fled the Fergana Valley to escape the violence.[50] According to this source, panicked Crimean Tatars and Meshketian Turks were flown out of their burning villages by the Soviet army on Soviet Mil-18 helicopters to neighboring Tajikistan in order to save their lives. Another source on the Crimean Tatars claims that hundreds of Crimean Tatars' houses were set ablaze or robbed in this violence.[51]

Rumors were rife in Uzbekistan at this time that dates had been set for attacks on other outsiders including the Crimean Tatars, according to local newspapers.[52] While there had always been 'pull' operating in the Crimean Tatar community's desire to return to the Crimea, the Fergana Valley events certainly provided a new 'push' factor in compelling many Crimean Tatars to consider leaving Uzbekistan. When asked what percentage of the Crimean Tatars wished to return to the Crimea in the aftermath of the Fergana Valley events, Crimean Tatar representative Aider Kurkchi, for example, claimed "It used to be about three quarters, but now it's practically all of them. After the events in Fergana, people don't believe that the authorities in Uzbekistan are capable of protecting them from possible pogroms."[53] Several Crimean Tatar interviewees remember the rhyming chant that was heard in many parts of the Uzbek republic at this time *"Russkii doloi, Tatarskii domoi, Koreetsii Hanoi!"* (Down with the Russians, home with the Tatars, and to Hanoi with the Koreans). For a people that had already experienced one mass displacement in the twentieth century, the prospects of another were indeed frightening.

[50] Interview with Mustafa Dzhemilev. Bahçesaray. Nov. 1997.
[51] Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia. op cit. no. 20. p. 245
[52] *Sobesednik.* no. 29. 1989. p. 12.
[53] *The USSR Today. Perspectives from the Soviet Press.* Columbus Ohio; Current Digest of the Soviet Press. 1985. p. 135. The newly established Organization of the Crimean Tatar National Movement (OCTNM) headed by Mustafa Dzhemilev and the equally recent Uzbek movement, *Birlik* (Unity), issued a joint appeal at this time to the people of Uzbekistan appealing for calm in the aftermath of the tragic events but this did not assuage many peoples' fears. "Appeal to the People of Fergana." *Report on the USSR.* Radio Liberty. vol. 1. no. 24. June 16, 1989. pp. 26-27.

Fortunately for the Crimean Tatars the impossible dream of returning to the 'Green Isle' become a reality in 1989. In that year the Kremlin commission dealing with the Crimean Tatars finally granted the Crimean Tatars the right to return in a planned fashion to their cherished Crimean homeland and even contemplated the re-establishment of the Crimean ASSR.[54] The permission to return to the Crimea eventually came in a small article published on the front page of the Soviet Union's two major newspapers *Izvestiia* and *Pravda* on November 24, 1989. The article called the expulsion of the Crimean Tatars and other punished peoples from their homelands "a barbaric act on the part of the Stalinist regime" and declared "The USSR Supreme Soviet considers it necessary to take the relevant legislative steps for the unconditional restoration of the rights of all Soviet citizens subjected to persecution."[55] Crimean Tatar interviewees described the excitement that swept through the Central Asian diaspora as unbelieving Crimean Tatars heard of the government's decree. The way was thus paved for tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars to return to a distant homeland on the Black Sea that most had only heard of from a disappearing generation that had been uprooted from their homes 45 years earlier.

The Return to the Homeland

Many of the Soviet Union's estimated 500,000 Crimean Tatars saw this moment as a historic window of opportunity that had been missed after the release from the special settlement camps in 1956 and quickly made preparations to return to the Crimea. Crimean Tatar activists went throughout the Crimean Tatar diaspora communities of Central Asia encouraging their compatriots to take advantage of

[54] This decision was made after several commissions had met to deal with the Crimean Tatars' demands.
[55] "Deklaratsiia Verkhovnogo Soveta Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik" *Izvestiia.* Nov. 24, 1989 p.1 and *Pravda* Nov. 24, 1989. p. 1.

the opportunity to return to the land of their ancestors. Although officials were sent by the Crimean authorities to discourage repatriation to the largely Russified Crimea, these efforts could not dispel the euphoria that swept through the Crimean Tatar settlements in 1989 and 1990.

In my interviews with Crimean Tatars in Central Asia and in the Crimea it soon became apparent that the migration of the Crimean Tatars from Central Asia to the Crimea was a highly organized event. Whole collective farms, neighborhoods or extended families migrated together and were met by Crimean Tatar leaders awaiting them in the Crimea. Parties of Crimean Tatars would arrive in tent camps set up for them in advance in the main square in Simferopol and would join in *samozakhvat* (self-seizure) "raids" on unused land belonging to state or collective farms in the Crimean countryside. In this fashion Crimean Tatar settlements appeared throughout the Crimean countryside and leaders were democratically elected from these settlements to represent their community in the Crimean Tatars' parallel parliament known as the *Mejlis*. This was an exciting period in Crimean Tatar history as older Crimean Tatars showed younger generations their old villages and haunts, local parallel governments known as mini-*Mejlises* were elected, settlements were built and the entire community celebrated its return to its home place. In many ways the sense of collectivism and national mission found among the determined Crimean Tatar repatriates was reminiscent of the settlement of Israel by Jews in the 1940s.

As in the case of the Jews arriving in Palestine before and after World War II, the local forces on the ground in the Crimea were opposed to the arrival of waves of people belonging to a different religion and ethnicity. The roots of this tension between the returning Crimean Tatars and local Slavic population in the Crimea were complex. Several Crimean Tatar leaders informed the author that, as the Crimean Tatars began their repatriation, they were approached by members of both the KGB and the GRU (Military Intelligence) offering them legal, logistical and financial support in their repatriation if they would take a pro-Russian stance in the Russian dominated Crimea. The KGB's aim appears to have been to forge an alliance with the returning Crimean Tatars and to use this highly mobilized people as leverage in working for the separation of the Crimea from the Ukrainian SSR. In any event the offer was refused by the Crimean Tatar leaders who instead turned to Kyiv for support and took a pro-Ukrainian stance.[56] For its part Kyiv initially supported the Crimean Tatars as a counterweight to Russian secessionist movements in the Crimea but has been less interested in supporting the Crimean Tatars since the break away movement was quelled by Kyiv in 1994 with the removal of the secessionist Crimean leader Yuri Meshkov.

In light of the Crimean Tatars pro-Ukrainian stance, it is not surprising that the Crimean Tatars' land seizures were strongly resisted by the conservative Russian Communist authorities in the Crimea (many of whom had ordered the re-deportation of Crimean Tatars in the 1960s, 70s and 80s). In one of its most calculated blows against the returning Crimean Tatars, the Crimean *oblast's* authorities organized a referendum on reestablishing the Crimea as an autonomous republic in an effort to preempt the Crimean Tatars' own calls for the re-establishment of the Crimean ASSR with prerogatives for its officially recognized *korennoi narod*. In 1991 the Ukrainian government responded to this vote and established the Crimea as the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea (ARC) with no mention of the Crimean Tatars in the republican constitution or allowances for Crimean Tatar as an officially recognized language.

Clashes between well organized Crimean Tatar groups and local Russian MVD (Ministry of Interior Affairs) and OMON (Special Police) units were common place at this time. Former *Mejlis* member Lilia Bujurova showed the author a video tape of the clash between Crimean Tatar squatters on the peach *kolkhoz* of Krasnii Rai in Alushta (October 1, 1992) that captured some of the Crimean Tatar returnees' determination to seize land in the Crimea. The Krasnii Rai squatter camp had surrounded their settlement with trenches, barbed wire and stakes and had raised a banner proclaiming 'homeland or death' over the settlement. When the local OMON

[56] During this time period there were many expressions of good will between the Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. Both sides began to recall historic ties and alliances, such as the Crimean Tatars' alliance with the great Cossack leader Bogdan Khmelnitsky during his wars with Poland, or the good relations between the 1917 Tatar *Kurultay* and the independent Ukrainian *Rada* prior to their subjugation by the Bolsheviks. During the 1999 *Kurultay* the leader of the Ukrainian nationalist party Reform and Order declared "When, during the 17th century the Ukrainian and Tatar divisions stood shoulder to shoulder they were unbeaten. Now it happens that we are again in one country. It is our country, together we will live and we will build her." For their part the pro-Ukrainian Tatars compare themselves to the Russified Ukrainian population of the Crimea and often claim "we are the only Ukrainians in the Crimea."

units attacked the camp, its outnumbered Crimean Tatar defenders fought back desperately against bulldozers, helmeted police, and tear gas with sticks and molotov cocktails.

When the wounded inhabitants of Krasnii Rai were arrested by the Crimean authorities tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars converged on the Crimean Parliament building in Simferopol (locally known as the Pentagon) and stormed its lower floors as those inside fired upon them. The highly mobilized Crimean Tatars refused to leave their positions around the Parliament on the Central Square until their compatriots were released. After a tense standoff in which OMON special troops clashed with Crimean Tatar protesters, the 26 Krasnii Rai settlers were released to a hero's welcome as thousands of cheering Crimean Tatars celebrated their new found political assertiveness.

Another example of the Crimean Tatars astounding political unity took place in June of 1995 when two Crimean Tatar vendors in the city of Kurotne (Feodosiia vicinity) were killed by members of the Crimean mafia belonging to the Bashmak gang for refusing to pay protection bribes.[57] When the local militia refused to arrest the guilty party (in the Crimea the lines between the mafia and militia are often blurred) hundreds of Crimean Tatars began to attack and burn businesses owned by the Bashmak gang. In the process, the head of the local police militia was taken hostage and convoys of Crimean Tatars from throughout the Crimea's settlements mobilized to drive to the region to support their beleaguered countrymen as they had done during the Krasnii Rai incident three years earlier.[58]

As the Crimean Tatar columns approached Feodosiia, they were blocked by a Ukrainian special force division known as the *Berkuts* (Golden Eagles). In the ensuing confrontation Mustafa Dzhemilev informed the author that the elite *Berkut* units fired on his people killing several unarmed Crimean Tatars in the process.[59] As the tension mounted in the Crimea, Dzhemilev and Crimean Tatar leader Refat Chuborov arrived at the scene and agreed to return the columns to their villages if the guilty parties in the Kurotne slayings were apprehended. Perhaps the most dangerous ethnic conflict in the post-Soviet Crimean Republican (if not post-Soviet Ukrainian)

[57] Returning Crimean Tatars in general refused to pay protection money.

[58] Viktor Tkachet et. al. *The Crimea, Chronicle of Seperatism (1992-1995)*. Kiev; Ukrainian Center for Independent Research. 1996. pp. 152-155.

[59] Interview with Mustafa Dzhemilev. Bahçesaray. 1997.

history was thus averted by the Crimean Tatars' traditionally moderate leadership.

The Construction of the Crimean Tatars as the Korennoi Narod *in the Crimea in the Post-Soviet Context*

The 'return' to the Crimean Peninsula by tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars who had spent their entire lives in Central Asia and their forceful seizures of land in this homeland offered a fascinating spectacle for political scientists, historians and anthropologists studying the phenomena of migration, homeland construction and mass-based nationalism. While it is easy to interpret this event as an obvious manifestation of late 20th century nationalism, I found it to be a more complex process. Many of those returning to the Crimea from Central Asia were city dwellers (estimates of the percentage of city dwellers among the Crimean Tatars prior to the repatriation vary from 62% to 80%) and the majority of this once-thoroughly agrarian people appear to have become urbanized during the exile period.[60] To many of those Crimean Tatars migrating to the Crimea, the 'Return to the Homeland' meant a move from life in an often dreary industrial, urban setting in Central Asia to the smaller towns and villages of the often romanticized Crimean countryside.

On many occasions the romanticized images of the Crimean Tatars' youth (or more commonly their parents' or grandparents' youth) in the Crimea were, however, destroyed by the harsh reality of life in the Crimea. Describing the orchards of his home village an elderly returnee, for example, pointed out that "In our village of Büyük Muskomiia in the Balaklava district, there were apple orchards. Such an abundance of varieties in them. Gul'pempe, Chelebi, Kandil, Sinal, Cary Sinal, Kara Sinal, Bal Alma, Pamyk Alma and many others I don't remember...Thanks to the power of the party *nomenklatura* many of these have been lost forever."[61]

The comparison between the Crimea of the late 1930s and the Crimea of today (which suffers from the typical environmental deg-

[60] Emil Payin. "Population Transfer: The Crimean Tatars Return Home." *Cultural Survival Quarterly*. Winter 1992. Vol.16. no. 1. p. 34. A. I. Kliachin. "Dinamika Etnichesskikh Sistem Rasseleniia v Krymu" *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie*. no. 2. March-April. 1992. p. 32.

[61] Midat Iunusov. "Vozrodit Starye Sorty" *Golos Kryma*. Feb. 2. 1996. p. 5.

radation that came with the Soviet Union's drive for industrialization) has caused much disillusionment among the Crimean Tatars who are returning to micro-homelands that have been altered in their absence. One Crimean Tatar wrote "In the time of Pushkin, our Salgir was a stormy, deep, and most of all a clear river. The contemporary poet cannot say anything of the sort about it."[62] According to this source "great damage was done to the Crimea's eco-system" when newcomers arrived in the Crimea and constructed concrete canals that siphoned off water from the Salgir and did not follow the Tatars' time honored canal building techniques.[63] Another Crimean Tatar source writes of the villages of Tarak Taş (Cleft Rock) in the Sudak valley:

> As an old traveler once wrote 'The valleys of the big and little Tarak Taş abound with brooks and the water is so abundant here it nourishes all the Sudak fields.' Alas, the water in this village was sufficiently strained that the numerous springs and brooks demanded careful expert care. The knowledge and skill was passed from one generation to the next, but right after the deportation, as a result of the unskilled activities of the new-comers to the village, the valley became dry.[64]

Such reconstructions of communal links to the Crimean land on the basis of indigenousness by Crimean Tatar settlers serve to reinforce this people's beliefs in their rights to the peninsula as the Crimea's *korennoi narod* or *öz sahipleri* (true owners). This is in some respects a holdover from the communal memory of the *korenizatsiia* period which constructed this people as the Crimea's most legitimate nation on the basis of its indigenous roots in the Crimea. The Crimean Tatar *Kurultay's* maximalist demands for quotas of up to one third of the seats in the Crimean parliament during the early 1990s (even though they only made up 11% of the Crimea's 1995 population of 2,685,000) also stem from this belief that the Crimean Tatars have special rights and political prerogatives in the Crimea that result from their indigenous roots in the peninsula.[65]

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[62] Ekaterina Urskaia. "Berega Voselye Salgir." *Golos Kryma.* Jan. 13, 1996. p. 5.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Taliat Ilias. "Sto Let i Vsia Zhizhn' Kryma." *Golos Kryma.* Aug. 16. 1996. p. 2.

[65] After much debate the Crimean Tatars agreed in 1994 to accept 14 seats in the 98 member-chamber seat Crimean legislature, a more accurate reflection of their actual numerical percentage in the Crimean Republic. This quota was, however, stripped from the Crimean Tatars in February 1998 by the Ukrainian government as part of its clamp down on the secessionist Crimean Republic and has been cause of great friction in the Crimea ever since. This is an example of how Kyiv has on occasion jettisoned its alliance with the Crimean Tatars when it has a differing political agenda of its own.

Since their repatriation the Crimean Tatars have fought to be recognized in international forums on national rights as the Crimea's officially recognized indigenous ethnic group.[66] In the convoluted language of the Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada* (Supreme Parliament), EU, UN, the Council of Europe and the Minority Rights Organization, the Crimean Tatar leadership, for example, places great importance on having their people defined not as a 'minority' but as an 'indigenous people' with native rights to their land.[67] One of the *Kurultay's* objectives has been to "Strive to have the Crimean Tatars recognized as the indigenous people of the Ukraine and the Crimea."[68] There is in fact a Crimean Tatar organization headed by Mejlis member Nadir Bekirov known as the *Foundation for Research and Support of Indigenous Peoples in the Crimea* which supports the formulation of special rights for the Tatars that resemble those given, for example, to the Sami Lapplanders in the Norwegian Assembly.[69] In response to this movement the Ukrainian government has declared the Crimean Tatars an indigenous people and has stated:

> The issue of the rights of indigenous peoples has a certain distinctiveness which distinguishes it from the general issue of minority rights

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[66] The Crimean Tatars at present do not make up the majority of any electoral district in the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea (ARC) and thus have no representation in the Crimean government at the moment. This is largely due to the fact that Russians do not vote for Crimean Tatar candidates, Crimean Tatars running for positions receive votes only from their co-ethnics.

[67] The UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and International Labor Organization Convention no. 169 have created mechanisms for providing indigenous peoples with special rights and prerogatives. The Crimean Tatar community are especially interested in having their rights protected in this international context.

[68] Natalia Belitsir. "Korenye Narody kak Ob'ekty i Subekty Mezhdunarodnogo Prava." *Tsentr Pliuralizma Biuletin.* Nov.-Dec. 1996. no. 4.

[69] In a recent interview *Mejlis* leader Refat Chubarov stated:

> I have my opinion that the Crimean Tatars, as well as some other ethnic communities of the Crimea (Karaims, Krymchaks, and Urums in the past) are the indigenous people of the peninsula, and the volume of their rights should be outlined by international standards in areas of peoples' rights, including indigenous...In my statements I have always underlined that we differ from other ethnic communities of the Crimea because we are an indigenous people. *Aydin. Center of Public Initiatives for the Crimea.* Issue no. 17. Nov. 16, 1998. p. 3.

> and, in particular, the rights of national minorities...A principal difference is that although indigenous groups are not titular or dominant ethnic groups, they have lived on the territories of modern independent states since time immemorial, consider these territories their homeland, and have maintained especially strong spiritual links to these territories.[70]

As the self-proclaimed indigenous people of the Crimea, the Crimean Tatars stress their unique claim to the land that had for two centuries been taken from them by Russian *pomeshchiks* and the Soviets. A declaration made at the historic second *Kurultay* held in Simferopol in June of 1991 proclaimed:

> The land and natural resources of the Crimea, including its therapeutic and recreational potential, are the basis of the national wealth of the Crimean Tatar people and cannot be utilized without its will or its clearly expressed approval. Any actions which harm the ecological status of the Crimea, including its offshore Black Sea waters, must be halted. Damage to nature and the resources of the Crimea must be compensated by the perpetrators.[71]

This emphasis on the Crimean Tatars' unique indigenous claim to the Crimea has led to an often uncompromising approach by the Crimean Tatar leadership. At its most extreme it has been pointed out that the Crimean Tatar ideologues has developed "a complete ethnological theory which claims that no one besides the Crimean Tatars has the right to be called 'Crimean people'."[72] This is an example of the exclusionary legal rights to national territory which was firmly encapsulated in Soviet national theory and which has been perpetuated in the post-Soviet context by native populations in the Baltics, Central Asia, Buryatia, Abkhazia, the Crimea and elsewhere.[73]

Guboglo and Chervonnaia cite as further proof of this tendency, the demand made by Crimean Tatar nationalists for Russians and

[70] *Verkhovna Rada.* "Draft Concept of the National Policy of the Ukraine in Relation to Indigenous Peoples." p.4.

[71] James Critchlow. *'Punished Peoples' of the Soviet Union.* New York; Helsinki Watch. 1991. p. 42. 280 Crimean Tatar delegates from throughout the USSR represented the Crimean Tatars in all their places of exile in the 1991 Kurultay.

[72] Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia. op. cit. no. 20 p. 238.

[73] According to Guboglo and Chervonnaia, the Crimean Tatar nationalist leaders consider all other nationalities in the Crimea to be " 'non-Tatars' or 'cultures', 'diasporas', 'enclaves', 'Slavic masses', 'colonists' or anything you wish but not 'people of the Crimea'." They also claim to have an exclusive right to self-determination in the region. Ibid.

Ukrainians to "release the Crimea which should be returned to the only people having a legal, historical right to it, the Crimean Tatars."[74] The Crimean Tatars bolster their exclusive claims to the Crimea with the oft repeated mantra that "the Crimean Tatars have only one homeland, the Crimea, and, unlike other nationalities, they have nowhere else to emigrate to avoid endless discrimination and violence."

Crimean Tatar Settlement Patterns

While Soviet nation building policies still shape many of the Crimean Tatars' actions in the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea which was formed in 1991, one must also understand the role of the communal memory in shaping the Crimean Tatars' collective activities. In particular, the Crimean Tatars' links to the Yaila and Yaliboyu micro homelands must be understood in order to understand the Crimean Tatars' current settlement patterns.

Many of those migrating to the Crimea intended to 'return' to the very village or region of the Crimea from whence their parents or grandparents had been deported in 1944. To a certain extent this impulse was a holdover from this people's pre-nationalist, agrarian ties to the land which were passed down to new generations in stories of the fields of one's home village, the mountains of one's specific region and so on. This desire to migrate to the *küçük vatan* (micro homeland), which had been described in detail as a paradise by the older generations, enforced this people's already powerful sense of attachment to their larger Crimean homeland which was defined in typically modern, nationalistic terms.

While the Crimean Tatars have been largely kept off the cherished Yaliboyu coast by the powerful Crimean mafia, the Crimean *nomenklatura* (bureaucratic elite), local city councils, large business interests and the Crimean MVD, many still dream of moving to this region endlessly described to them in the stories of their childhood. The first tentative Crimean Tatar settlements have appeared in the Sudak Valley, in the Feodosiia vicinity and on a hillside overlooking Yalta and these hard won coastal footholds are considered by the *Mejlis* to be the first step in the eventual return of Crimean Tatars

[74] Ibid. p. 237.

to this historic Tatar zone. Most Crimean Tatars have, not surprisingly, settled in other historically Tatar but less contentious zones of Crimean Tatar settlement in the northern foothills of the Yaila mountains, with the Bahçesaray district, Simferopol district and Belogorsk district (still known as Karasu Bazar by the Crimean Tatars) receiving the most settlers.[75] The strip between Simferopol and Belogorsk, in particular, has seen considerable Crimean Tatar settlement.[76] On a more practical level many Crimean Tatars have also attempted to settle in the Crimea's cities in order to find jobs but most have been excluded from the Crimea's urban areas and live in sprawling squatter suburbs outside its major towns.

While one can debate the Crimean Tatars' motives for leaving their places in Central Asia, where most had finally prospered and become socially integrated, few can argue as to the results. In spring of 1987 there were a mere 17,400 Crimean Tatars in the Crimea. By June of 1991 the number had risen to 135,000, and by May of 1992, more than 173,000 had left Central Asia for the Crimean Peninsula. By the end of 1993, approximately 259,000, or just over half of the Crimean Tatar nation of 500,000, had returned to the Crimea.[77] This was to be the largest migration in Crimean Tatar history and was to surpass even the Great Migration of 1860 in its scale. On this historic occasion, however, the Crimean Tatars were, for the first time, migrating *to* the Crimean Peninsula not abandoning it.

If it was NKVD transport trains described as "crematoria on wheels" that brought the Crimean Tatars to Central Asia, it was the trusty Soviet *Lada*, the automotive badge of success for most exiles, that carried the Crimean Tatars back to their homeland. In the early

[75] According to the latest statistics the Crimean Tatars are settled in the districts as follows: Simferopol 28,032, Belogorskii 23,892, Bahçesaray 22,721, Dzhankois'kii 21,640, Kirovskii 17,981, Krasnogvardskii 16,821, Leninskii 15,046, Saks'kii 14,440, Pervomaiskii 11,291, Sovetskii 11,432, Evpatoriia 7,553, Krasnoperokopskii 7,202, Chornomorskii 5,824, Rozdolnen'skii 5,217, Sudakskii 4,492, Feodosiia 3,746, Alushta 1,560. Iulia Tishchenko and Viiacheslav Pikhovshek. *Povernennia Krymskikh Tatar. Khronika Podii.* Kyiv; Ukrains'kii Nezalezhnii Tsentr Politichnikh Doslidzhen'. 1999. p. 332.

[76] The Crimean Tatars have their highest percentage of concentration in the Belogorskii (Karasu Bazar) region where they make up 33% of the total population. Overall the Crimean Tatars make up 11.9% of the Crimean Autonomous Republic. Oleksandr Piskun. "The Crimean Tatar Issue. Current Status and Prospects for Solution." *Krym'ski Studii. Informatsiinii Biuletin.* no. 1. 2000. p. 80.

[77] Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia. op. cit. no. 20. p. 9.

1990s whole villages and extended families formed convoys of cars and migrated to the distant Crimean Peninsula on either the southern route (Turkmenistan-Caspian Sea Ferry-Baku-northern Caucasus-Crimea) or the northern alternative across the plains of Kazakhstan and the northern Caucasus. The stories of cars being attacked by bandits in Kazakhstan, of heavy 'fines' being levied on Tatars by GAI (auto police) officials in Turkmenistan and of the general risks involved in moving across a crumbling empire with all one's possessions, demonstrate the courage and determination of the Crimean Tatar migrants to reach the 'Green Isle'.

It is impossible to overestimate the sacrifices this people have made in returning to the Crimea to fulfill their dreams of once again living in their Crimean homeland. Most Crimean Tatars were forced to sell their houses and apartments in Central Asia at deflated prices. Their quality of living then declined dramatically as most were forced to build primitive brick houses covered with corrugated tin roofs (usually on scrubby unwanted land in the Crimean countryside) in order to live in the peninsula. In spite of these hardships, the following interview with a Crimean Tatar returnee is typical of the hardy settler mentality that has developed among the Crimean Tatar repatriates. "Saniye, now 65, and her husband, Seidjalil Asanov, 71, left behind a six-room house in Tajikistan. 'There was a garden, an orchard with grapes and figs, an aisle of flowers-it was so beautiful' she recalled. Now they live in a flimsy shack made of sheet metal, burlap and wood, surrounded by dust, mud and weeds, they couldn't be happier. 'We're living in the homeland' she beamed."[78]

Reasons for the Decline in Migration to the Crimea

By 1994 the pace of the migration had, however, tapered off for a number of reasons, the most obvious being problems with integrating this large population into the resource-scarce Crimea. With a population of over two and a half million largely unwelcoming Russians and (to a much lesser extent) Russified Ukrainians, there were very few jobs, almost no health care, constant anti-Tatar dis-

[78] Fred Kaplan. "After Decades in Exile, Crimean Tatars Reclaim Homeland." *Boston Globe.* Sept. 6, 1992. p. 14.

crimination and poor living conditions in the Crimea.[79] For many Crimean Tatar repatriates the idealized image of the Crimean homeland was dispelled by the harsh realities of attempting to find work in one's profession and trying to build a niche for one's family in a land where they were largely unwanted.

Few Crimean Tatars have been able to settle in the Crimea's cities where jobs are available and most live in *samozakhvat* (self seizure) settlements built in the Crimea's countryside or in the outskirts of larger cities. Most Crimean Tatars in the Crimea have been forced to settle in primitive settlements such as those located between Simferopol and Belogorsk-Karasu Bazar such as Lazovoe, Sary Su, Kamenka, Aromatnaya, Svetochnaia, Khosh Geldi, and Bogatoe. Other Crimean Tatar pockets can be found in the Simferopol area, such as the settlements of Stroganovka, Marino, Belaya, Fontany, and in the Evpatoriia district in such settlements as Ismail Bey and Yar Kaya or in the settlements of Ak Kaya (Yalta), Verhnaya Kutuzhova (between Alushta and Simferopol), Koktebel and Primorskoye (Feodosiia area) and numerous settlements around Bahçesaray, such as Skalistoye.

These settlements often lack basic amenities such as paved roads, running water, or electricity and conditions in the simple squatter villages are particularly bleak in winter.[80] Health conditions have deteriorated dramatically as a result and illnesses, such as tuberculosis and nerve problems, are widespread among the Crimean Tatar settlements. Few settlements have access to medical facilities and many illnesses go untreated.

In addition, the problems associated with de-urbanization have been particularly acute as the large number of Crimean Tatar white collar workers and intelligentsia (doctors, engineers, professors, teachers) are forced to sell goods in the market, grow their own food and build their own houses in the primitive squatter settlements surrounding the Crimea's cities. The Crimean Tatars' traditional agricultural skills in viniculture, step terrace farming, fruit production and tobacco growing had of course been lost when their 'roots' to the Crimea were sundered during the exile period and most repatriates have encountered problems adapting to the rural conditions in the land of their parents and grandparents. While Crimean Tatar leaders were able to optimistically claim in 1989 that "99% of the Crimean Tatars were ready to move to the Crimea" most now admit that the poor social, political and material conditions in the Crimea have halted the return migrations to the Crimea for the foreseeable future.[81]

[79] In general the Crimea's Ukrainian population have been more receptive to the Crimean Tatar returnees than the local Russian population. For the most part, however, the largely Russified Ukrainian population of the Crimea are politically unmobilized and have failed to act as a pro-Kyiv lobby group in its battle of decrees with the secessionist Russian-dominated government of the Autonomous Crimean Republic.

[80] According to Crimean Tatar sources, of the 291 Crimean Tatar settlements in the Crimea, a full 70% are without running water and 25% without electricity and 90% are without tarmac roads. *Dokumenty Kurultaia Krmyskotatarskogo Naroda. 1991-1998 gg.* Simferopol; Medzhlis Krymskotatarskogo Naroda. 1999. p. 123.

The slowing pace of return to the Crimea was in part due to events surrounding the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Soviet state initially planned to organize the repatriation of the Crimean Tatars in a planned fashion. The so called "State Program for the Return of the Crimean Tatars to the Crimean *Oblast*" aimed to assist the Crimean Tatars in the construction of housing, finding of employment and development of social and cultural infrastructures.[82] Financial and material resources were also promised to the Crimean Tatar repatriates from the Uzbek SSR, Tajik SSR, Ukrainian SSR and the Russian Federation.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the very state that had ironically done so much to destroy this people, the Crimean Tatars lost an important source of funding and many Crimean Tatars could not afford to return to the Crimea when hyper-inflation swept the post-Soviet republics in the early 1990s. In addition, as many as 80,000 returning Crimean Tatars were denied Ukrainian citizenship until 1999 due to the fact that they arrived in the Ukraine after the passing of the 1991 Ukrainian citizenship law granting citizenship only to those living in the country at that time. This lack of citizenship excluded many repatriates from medical facilities, pensions, schooling, voting etc. When combined with first hand reports of the dismal political and socio-economic conditions awaiting Crimean Tatars in the Crimean Peninsula, the depletion of this peoples' life savings related to post-Soviet hyper-inflation convinced approximately half of the Crimean Tatar nation to remain in their places of exile.

In addition, although several CIS states signed an agreement in

[81] *The Crimean Review*. vol. IV. No. 2, 18. Dec. 1989, p. 3.

[82] "Vosstanavlivia Spravedlivost." *Pravda*. May 17, 1990. no. 147. p. 2.

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on October 9, 1992 calling for the lifting of bureaucratic barriers to the repatriation of citizens of those newly independent countries with Crimean Tatar origins, red tape and bureaucratic hurdles remained for those attempting to emigrate to the Ukraine and renounce their previous citizenship.[83] In particular it should be noted that, although the Ukrainian and Uzbek governments signed a protocol in the fall of 1998 on the "facilitation of the decision of citizenship for deportees, their children and grandchildren," other CIS countries have failed to make such agreements. The approximately 30,000 Crimean Tatars living in the Russian Federation, in particular, face numerous obstacles in emigrating to the Ukraine.

It should also be stated that the Crimean Tatars appear to have lost out in the privatization of land which took place in the Crimea as a result of 1999 decree privatizing collective farms. This was largely as a result of Crimean government policies designed to exclude them from land. Only 16,000 of the more than a quarter of a million Crimean Tatars living in the Crimea belonged to collective farms at this time. Those who did not belong to collectives failed to receive land when these collective lands were privatized.

As the indigenous people of the Crimea, the Crimean Tatars have called on the Crimean Parliament to allot them 'reservations' for returning generations of Crimean Tatars but this concept has yet to be fully implemented.[84] For the returning Crimean Tatars of today, the land issue is as burning as it was for the Young Tatar leader Abdureshid Mehdi at the beginning of the 20th century. As Dzhemilev explained it "Around 200,000 more Tatars are getting ready to return to the homeland. What should we tell them when they re-

[83] The 1992 'Bishkek Agreement on the Question of the Re-establishment of the Rights of Deported Peoples Belonging to National Minorities and Nations' was signed by Armenia, the Russian Federation, Belarus, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Moldavia and the Ukraine. The most notable omission in this list of signing parties is Georgia which, to this day, stubbornly refuses to allow the repatriation of the long-suffering Meshketian Turks. For the text of this document see Iulia Tishchenko and Viiacheslav Pikhovshek. *Povernennia Krymskikh Tatar. Khronika Podii.* Kyiv; Ukrains'kii Nezalezhnii Tsentr Politichnikh Doslidzhen'. 1999. pp. 275-77.

[84] The reservation policy in many ways harks back to Veli Ibrahimov's *korenizatsiia*-era dream of setting aside lands for Crimean Tatars returning from the Balkan and Turkish diasporas. *Draft Law of the Ukraine on the Status of the Crimean Tatar People.*

turn and there's nothing for them?"[85] It is also interesting to note that, as of March 2000, the Crimean Tatar local *mejlis* of Bahçesaray, headed by Ilmi Umerov, has begun calling for the return of the historic *vakif* lands following the example of other indigenous groups who have fought to regain their lost lands, but there appears to be little real chance of this happening in the near future.

The Socio-Cultural Effects of the Central Asian Exile

Those exiles who have managed to return to their imagined homeland in the Crimea are still closely linked to their former places of exile and many aspects of Crimean Tatar society and culture have been drastically affected by this nation's half century sojourn in Central Asia. At the time of the deportation, for example, the Crimean Tatar people had made great strides in coalescing around a distinct Crimean Tatar national identity but local sub-national regional-linguistic identities were still present and important.

In reminiscing on his childhood in the Crimea prior to World War II, the Crimean Tatar author Cengiz Dagci informed the author that there were still major cleavages between the Nogais and the Tats even at this late date. According to this source, very few Tats, who considered themselves to more cultured than the Nogais, intermarried with these plain dwellers from the northern Crimea in his youth.[86]

The exile experience in Central Asia, however, appears to have had a considerable homogenizing influence on the Crimean Tatars and these cleavages have been largely subsumed since the deportation and return.[87] In many ways the exile has thus broken down the regional linguistic differences that had for centuries divided the Tatars of the Crimea and this experience acted as the final catalyst in the

[85] Lily Hyde. "Crimean Tatars Demand Ancestral Lands." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. World Monitor.* March 26, 2000.

[86] Conversation with Cengiz Dagci, London, England. January 2000. While this source stressed the differences between the Tats and Nogais he made a point of stating that "both groups were good Crimean Tatar patriots."

[87] In her dissertation on the Crimean Tatar language Mica Hall writes "In exile the dialects became less distinct as northern and southern Crimean Tatars found themselves living together as a result of the deportation." Mica Hall. *Russian as Spoken by the Crimean Tatars.* Philosophy Dept. Dissertation, University of Washington. 1997. p. 37.

forging of the unified Crimean Tatar nation of today. Most Crimean Tatars who do speak their native language now speak the Middle Path Kipchakized Oghuz Tatar language which became widespread during the 1920s and 30s and have little interest in sub-ethnic affiliations.This experience was interestingly enough also found among the eclectic Meshketian Turks or Ahiska who did not actually unite to form a nation until the exile period.

While Crimean Tatars are still aware of their original sub ethnic-geographic origins and all can tell you whether they are a Yaila Tat, Yaliboyu Tat or Nogai, their contemporary identities are more profoundly shaped by their exile experience. Crimean Tatars who lived in Tashkent, for example, consider themselves to be cosmopolitan and talk of this great Central Asian city's restaurants, efficient subway system, museums and so forth. Those from Samarkand have a certain nostalgia for that city's *chaikhanas* (traditional tea shops), and longing for the soil which grew "Uzbekistan's best grapes." The Crimean Tatars who were settled in the Fergana Valley speak of the mountains and rich piedmont soil found there and those Crimean Tatars from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan have completely different geographic and cultural points of reference. Geographically-based identities that were forged during the exile years now appear to be more salient than the previous sub-ethnic identities which were forged over hundreds of years in the Crimea's distinct zones. A Tat Tatar from Tashkent is, for example, more likely to hire a fellow *Tashkentli* (Tashkenter) on the basis of this shared background than a fellow Tat whose family lived in Dushanbe (Frunze), Tajikistan during the exile period.

Talk in the primitive Crimean Tatar settlements is also laced with nostalgia for life in Uzbekistan. Crimean Tatar officials estimate that approximately 72% of the returnees are from Uzbekistan with 16% coming from Russia (predominately the Krasnodar *Krai* and Moscow) and the rest hailing from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine.[88] Crimean Tatars from the large 'Soviet' capital city of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, (which has a Russophone population that is roughly equal to that of the entire Crimea) miss its urban culture and amenities. Many Crimean Tatars from Tashkent were white collar workers who shopped in the city's massive stores such

[88] *Spektr. Informastionanno-Analiticheskii Biuleten.* Simferopol; Crimean Center for Ethno-Social Investigation. 1996. no. 5 (13).pt. 2. p. 21.

as *Detskii Mir* (Children's World), *GUM* (the State Universal Shopping Mall), or the colorful Charsou Bazaar. These Sovietized Tatars spoke to their Russian and Uzbek colleagues and neighbors in the *lingua Sovietica* of Russian, enjoyed performances at the Navoi Theater and have found that they miss the amenities of life in a large city. It is also interesting to note that, while in the Crimea in the Fall of 1997, I ate at several Crimean Tatar restaurants with names like 'The *Markanda'* (The Samarkand) which served Uzbek *laghman* (noodles), Uzbek-style *plov* (rice), Uzbek *manty* (meat 'raviolis') and other examples of Central Asian cuisine which have now become a part of the Crimean Tatar diet.

Much of this nostalgia for Central Asia is certainly a reflection of the general post-Soviet longing for the financial and political security and stability that marked the Soviet Union from the 1960s to early 1980s, but it is also based on the truly stark position many Crimean Tatar repatriates find themselves in today. For most Crimean Tatars in the post-Soviet Crimea the quality of housing, schooling and medical attention has declined drastically and the returnees have faced considerable social, economic and political marginalization in their cherished 'Zion.'

Crimean Tatar men (the traditional providers in Muslim societies) frequently cannot find work in the Crimea and divorce, which was previously unheard of in this culturally Muslim society, has begun to rise among the Crimean Tatars as a result. Life is so harsh in the Crimea that some Crimean Tatars have actually been forced to leave the 'Green Isle' of the Crimea to return to Central Asia. Others have built crude cinder block houses in the Crimea (as a means for staking a claim to plots seized from the government) but continue to live in Central Asia and the adjacent Krasnodar *Krai* until conditions improve in the Crimea.[89] The Tatar settlements today are in fact filled with half finished houses that belong to Tatars who continue to live and work in Central Asia and elsewhere. All Crimean Tatar settlements are littered with rough hewn, spongy yellow building blocks carved from the limestone of the Yaila used to build houses

[89] The Crimean Tatars have received some badly needed assistance from the UNHCR in its Shelter and Communal Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program for FDPs (Formerly Deported Peoples). "Danish Refugee Council Assists Repatriates in the Crimea." *Citizen. UNHCR Newsletter.* no. 7. 1999. Of the former Soviet governments, the Ukraine is the only state to offer the Crimean Tatars financial assistance.

that may never be completed. In many instances Crimean Tatars live in the first floor of houses while the second floor remains unfinished or dwell in simple one room structures with a toilet and modest cooking facilities.

In spite of the hardship, most Crimean Tatars in the Crimea are determined to remain in their homeland. When I asked Crimean Tatar settlers why they made such sacrifices to return to the Crimea, interviewees in settlements throughout the Crimea invariably answered with the simple expression *"rodina eta rodina"* (the homeland is the homeland). A 60 year old Crimean Tatar returnee perhaps best summed up her people's unwavering, deep rooted determination to live in their ancestral lands when she said "I sold everything for pennies, packed up, gathered my family and moved here. My father recently died, at the age of 91, but he was happy to die here in our homeland."[90]

Despite the obvious feelings of disillusionment, most Crimean Tatars in the Crimea feel a sense of partaking in something larger than themselves, namely the rebuilding of a nation and the reversing of centuries of expulsion from the Crimean land. This makes the hardships bearable for many. Mixed with the sadness of financial loss and hardship there is thus a feeling of triumph in the Crimean Tatar settlements.

Lilia Bujurova, Crimean Tatar national poetess, a popular television hostess on the Crimean language news and commentary program known as *Ana Yurt* (Motherland) and a former member of the *Mejlis*, explained this mixed emotion to me in 1997.[91] Reminiscing on her youth in Central Asia Bujurova explained "We spent our entire lives promising ourselves that we would, at all cost, return to this place. No one thought it would be easy, and in truth it has been hard. But we are all of us happy to be in the place we grew up loving. This place is who we are as a people. No one will take this away from us again, we are a hard working people and sooner or later we will flourish here."[92]

This spirit of optimism and a strong communal will to succeed in

[90] Urszula Doroszewska. "Crimea: Whose Country." *Uncaptive Minds.* vol. 5, no. 3. (21). Fall 1992. p. 44.

[91] The Ana Yurt television show is shown on Crimean television for one and a half hour per week as part of the Crimean government's cultural concessions to the Crimean Tatars. While the Crimean Tatars previously had more air time it has recently been curtailed.

[92] Interview with Lilia Bujurova, Simferopol, Nov. 1997.

spite of the immense obstacles is best captured in Lilia Bujurova's celebration of homeland written the year the Crimean Tatars' mass return movement began in 1989 entitled *"What is the Homeland's Scent?"*:

> Of what does the homeland smell?
> Of a dry blade of grass,
> Caught in a child's hair,
> Of a pine branch, of bitter wormwood,
> Or, of a separation, buried in the heart?
> Or, of a lamb's wool, of aromatic coffee,
> Tinkling as it pours into thin little cups
> Of mountain tea, of almonds, fragrant with mint,
> Of today's reality, of yesterday's dream?
> Or of the searing cry of a lone seagull?
> Or, of the snowy peak of Çadir Dağ?
> Or, of the distant music of an ancient song?
> Oh no, my homeland smells of hope.[93]

The Crimean Tatar Diaspora in Central Asia Today

While all Crimean Tatars in the Crimea harbor a deep seated hope that the portion of their nation still in *sürgün* will return to the Crimea to join in the rebirth of their nation, the author found little evidence in Central Asia of any future mass migrations to the Crimea from this region. Conditions in the Crimea are so bleak that the *Mejlis* now believes it is irresponsible to encourage further migration from Central Asia to the Crimea.

There will doubtless be a trickle of migration to the Crimea from Central Asia as Crimean Tatars move to join family members in the peninsula but it will in all probability not assume the vast scale of the second *Büyük Göç* (Great Migration) of 1989-1993. Only an external catalyst (such as the breakdown of general security and rising anti-outsider nativism in Uzbekistan, perhaps following the death of Uzbek president Islam Karimov) could call forth such a massive movement to the Crimean Peninsula from Central Asia.

It should, however, be stated that there is increasing uneasiness among the Crimean Tatar community of Krasnodar *Krai* in the northern Caucasus resulting from rising anti-Islamic sentiment in this

[93] Lilia Bujurova. "Kak Pakhnet Rodina?" *Tak eto Bylo.* Moscow; Pisan. 1993. p. 123.

region. The rise in anti-Islamism in the region is, in part, a backlash resulting from the unsuccessful outcome of the first Russo-Chechen War (1994-96) and continuing violence in neighboring Chechnya and Dagestan related to the 1999-2001 Russo-Chechen War. As local Russian politicians with nationalist agendas in this region continue to discriminate against Muslims here this may cause the remaining population of less than 15,000 Crimean Tatars still living here to migrate to the Crimean Peninsula in the near future.[94]

Most Crimean Tatars remaining in Central Asia or the Krasnodar *Krai*, however, simply cannot afford to make the costly migration to the Crimea at the moment. The financial position of those Crimean Tatars remaining in Central Asia is not much better than that of their kin in the Crimea according to Izzet Khairov, the former representative of the Crimean Tatar *Mejlis* in Uzbekistan. Khairov claims that the comparatively well off Crimean Tatars of the Central Asian diaspora have already left for the Crimea and many of those who have remained in Central Asia suffer in economic terms from the general post-Soviet economic collapse. According to this source:

> Today (1995) in the Central Asia region there are close to 200,000 Crimean Tatars, among whom 140-160,000 continue to live in Uzbekistan, for the most part concentrated in the industrial regions of the republic. 70-80% of families are incomplete and divided (between Central Asia and the Crimea), the level of life among the average Crimean Tatar family in Uzbekistan is significantly lower (by 1.5 to 2 times) than in the Crimea...In relation to the Crimean Tatars, the government institutions and organizations of Uzbekistan consider them to be minions *(vremenshchiky)*, or at best, potential non-citizens of Uzbekistan. For this reason they are unable to better their living conditions or rise up the work ladder. Their poor financial position does not allow them to return to the homeland with their compatriots.[95]

[94] The Meshketian Turks who have settled in this region have been the target of particular discrimination at the hands of racist authorities. Local governor Nikolai Kondratenko has not allowed the Meshketians, who are openly called 'blacks' *(cherny)*, to register their residences and the 'illegal' settlements of approximately 30,000 Meshketians in Krymsk and Abynsk regions have been attacked by local Cossacks. In a show of solidarity, the Crimean Tatars of this region have, however, been very helpful in providing assistance and housing to the Meshketian Turks who are still living in limbo as a result of the Georgian government's adamant refusal to allow them to return to their homeland. Michael Slackman. "Displaced Peoples of the former Soviet Union Living in Bitter Lands." *Newsday*. May 21, 2000.

[95] Svetlana Chervonnaia. *Krymskotatarskoe Natsional'noe Dvizhenie 1994-1995*. Moscow; Russian Academy of Sciences. 1997. p. 10.

Naturally, the Crimean Tatar *Mejlis* fears that this half of their nation which remains scattered in its places of exile will not benefit from the national renaissance which is taking place among the compactly settled Tatar population of the Crimea. A 1995 declaration by the Crimean Tatar *Mejlis*, for example, warned of the threat of the "complete degradation of the people" who remained in Central Asia without a Crimean Tatar press, schools or radio to help them sustain their identity.[96]

While in Uzbekistan I found this to be a very real threat as some urbanized Crimean Tatars in Tashkent (the largest center of Crimean Tatar inhabitation) considered themselves to be 'internationalists' in the old Soviet sense and unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to maintain their national identity (most notably selling their apartments, quitting their jobs and moving to the Crimea). Although the Crimean Tatars have opened a cultural center in Tashkent it is difficult to imagine this having a considerable impact on the Tatars who are scattered in towns throughout Uzbekistan and greater Central Asia. In addition, exiles who are forced to remain in Central Asia find themselves politically marginalized by the Crimean Tatar *Mejlis* which focuses its activities on those Tatars who have returned to the Crimea.[97]

While it is risky to make assumptions concerning the fate of this nation which now sees itself divided between the Central Asian diaspora and the Crimean homeland, it is safe to make a few cautious predictions. Firstly, it can be safely argued that the portion of the Crimean Tatar population compactly settled in the Crimean homeland will certainly maintain and rebuild a much more dynamic and active national identity than the segment of the nation scattered throughout Central Asia. It is also safe to argue that, barring any reoccurrence of events similar to the 1989 Fergana Valley pogroms, a sizable portion of the Crimean Tatar people will, by circumstance or by choice, remain in Central Asia, perhaps permanently.

[96] Ibid.

[97] According to Chervonnaia "the growing separation between the *Mejlis* of the Crimean Tatar people and that section of the Crimean Tatars which was unable to return to the Crimea prior to 1996 is reflected in its composition. Of the 33 members of the newly formed *Mejlis*, chosen by the third *Kurultay* (Congress) in 1996, only 2 live beyond the borders of the Crimea (Zevri Kurtbedinov from Tajikistan and Izzet Khairov from Uzbekistan). This in no way reflects the real proportion between the Crimean Tatar population in the Crimea and that beyond her borders." Ibid. p. 14.

The most nationally active and energetic portion of this nation has of course migrated to its homeland. Many Crimean Tatars in Central Asia, however, continue to identify with the Crimea and this may help them sustain some form of a distinct diasporic national identity even if this population does lose its native language and many of its distinctive national traits. This scattered community may in fact maintain a diasporic link with the *yeşil ada* in much the same way that many in the Crimean Tatar communities of the Dobruca and Turkey did in the 20th century. Popular Crimean Tatar journals which make their way to Central Asia, such as *Avdet* (Return), *Golos Kryma* (Voice of the Crimea), *Vatan* (Homeland) and *Salgir* (the name of a cherished river in the Crimea) are replete with descriptions of the homeland and full of articles on the Crimea's history, geography, culture, and archeology. The constantly recurring theme of the Crimea certainly serves to keep the dream of migrating alive in the minds of those left behind in the places of exile. In many ways then, these publications may serve the same role among the Crimean Tatar diaspora of Central Asia that Müstecip Ülküsal's journal *Emel* did in the Romanian and Turkish diasporas, namely it will contribute to the maintenance of Crimean Tatar identity in this region.

With the re-establishment of a Crimean Tatar presence in the Crimea the history of migration that began with the 1783 mass movement to the imagined homeland of the Ottoman Empire by Crimean *muhacirs* has come full circle. The Crimean Tatars' unique territorialized identity, developed during a half century-long process of nation building begun by Ismail Bey Gasprinsky, Abdureshid Mehdi, Numan Çelebi Cihan, and Veli Ibrahimov has allowed this people to begin the process of reversing over 200 years of out-migration and expulsion and has enabled them to rebuild their ethnie on the ancestral lands lost to their forbears.

Today there are more Crimean Tatars in the Crimean Peninsula than at any time since the Great Migration of 1860 and this small nation's chances for thriving in a Crimea governed by the multi-national Ukrainian Republic that is in the process of constructing a civil society have never been more propitious.[98] As of December 31,

[98] A recent government draft declaration on the Crimean Tatars' status in the Ukraine states "...it is necessary to understand that the historical homeland of the Crimean Tatars, where they as an ethnos were formed, is under the jurisdiction of Ukraine, which first of all, is obliged to draw up a set of political-legal measures guaranteeing the preservation and development of the Crimean Tatar ethnos in Ukraine." Yuri Beluha. Deputy Head of State Committee on Nationalities and Migration. *Draft Recommendation.* cited in *Krym'ski Studii. Informatsiinii Biuletin.* no. 1. 2000. p. 61.

1999 the long struggle to acquire Ukrainian citizenship for approximately 80,000 Crimean Tatars who had not been granted citizenship rights in 1991 was solved by the Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada* (Parliament) with its decree entitled 'On Measures Concerning Resolving the Problems with the Citizenship of Formerly Deported Peoples and Their Descendants Returning to the Ukraine from the Republic of Uzbekistan.'[99] The attacks on Crimean Tatar *samozakhvat* settlements of the early 1990s have, since 1994 (when the Ukrainian government reigned in pro-Russian secessionist leaders in the Crimea), largely ceased and most Crimean Tatars are now struggling to overcome high unemployment and their lack of political representation rather than struggling to defend their hard won settlements from attacks.[100] The secular, politically aware nation that Numan Çelebi Cihan dreamed of is now a reality in the Crimean *vatan*.[101]

This rebirth of Crimean Tatar parent community in the 'Green Isle' of the Crimea will also perpetuate the existence of Crimean Tatar identity in the Central Asian, Balkan and Turkish diasporas in the future by providing Crimean Tatars in these areas with a living focus for their diasporic identity. As the Crimean Tatars in the Crimea partake in the general reconstruction of identity that is occurring throughout the former Soviet Union, their struggle to rebuild their people will be aided by their bonds to this larger diasporic 'nation' that is spread from the mountains of Tajikistan to the Danube delta.

[99] Crimean Tatars migrating to the Crimea from Uzbekistan faced many difficulties in relinquishing their Uzbek citizenship and acquiring Ukrainian citizenship, most notably a considerable fine leveled on them by the Uzbek government. An agreement between Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma and Uzbek President Islam Karimov to help repatriate the Crimean Tatars, which may overcome these problems, was signed in October 2000. "Ukraine, Uzbekistan Sign Deal to Help Resettle Crimean Tatars." *Turkistan Newsletter.* Oct. 16, 2000.

[100] As of spring 2000 approximately 46.9% of Crimean Tatars in the Crimea were unemployed. *Krym'ski Studii. Informatsiinii Biuletin.* no. 1. 2000. p. 65.

[101] Ironically enough, it can be argued that, in many ways, the educated, secular, mobilized nation dreamed of by nationalist intellectuals like Çelebi Cihan was forged by the tragic Soviet experience.

Postscript

Although the Communist-dominated Crimean government has largely brought a halt to its campaign to expel the Crimean Tatars since 1994, the potential for violence in this region nevertheless remains real. The Crimean Tatars' political struggle for, among other things, a voice in local Crimean Republic affairs, greater rights and freedoms, desperately needed job opportunities, land, restitution, the return of their fellow countrymen from Central Asia, the rebirth of their culture and an end to anti-Tatar discrimination continues.

In January 1999 the Crimean Tatar *Mejlis* building in Simferopol was fire bombed by unknown assailants and considerable damage was done to the offices of Mustafa Dzhemilev Kirimoglu. In the spring of 1999 a Crimean Tatar mosque in the Yalta vicinity was also firebombed by unknown assailants and tensions ran high at this time.[102] Most recently, in January 2000 the Crimean militia raided the renovated *Mejlis* building and confiscated documents leading to the growing potential for conflict between the Crimean Tatars and local authorities.

Perhaps the greatest cause of tension between the local authorities and the Crimean Tatars, however, is the continued exclusion of the Crimean Tatars from the Crimean *Verkhovna Rada* (Parliament). Currently, of the hundred deputies in this local organ, only one is a Crimean Tatar and he was elected on the Communist platform having openly distanced himself from the Crimean Tatar national movement. The Crimean Tatars thus have no voice in the Crimean government despite the fact that they make up between 10 and 11% of the autonomous republic's population. In many ways then the Crimean Tatars' position has deteriorated in the Crimea since the mid 1990s when they had 14 quota seats in the government. In the spring of 2000 Oxana Shevel wrote "The Crimean Tatars quest for greater political rights in the Crimea have met with virtually a deaf ear...Anti-Tatar prejudice is still widespread among the population and elites and some members of the Crimean parliament openly voice their opinion that 'Tatars are good for nothing other than trading goods in the market'."[103]

[102] Mehmet Tutuncu. *Open Letter to High Commissioner on Human Rights of the UN on Crimean Tatars.* April 4, 1999.

[103] Oxana Shevel. "The Crimean Tatars and the Ukrainian State." *Paper given at the 5th Annual World Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities.* Columbia University, NY. April 15, 2000.

While the situation in the Crimea hardly resembles the tension found in early 1990s, Dzhemilev is quick to point out that the potential for real violence lies just below the surface in this volatile region. The political and economic marginalization of the Crimean Tatars in the Crimea and their deepening economic plight may lead to a radicalization of the historically peaceful Crimean Tatar national movement in the future.

Certain elements in the Crimean Tatar society, such as Server Karimov's nationalist *Adalet* (Justice) party or the newly established *Vatan* party have already begun to move in a more radical, nationalist direction. Karimov informed the author in an interview held in offices in the *Mejlis* that were subsequently destroyed in the January 1999 bombing that his organization was gaining adherents who were increasingly disillusioned with the meager results stemming from the Crimean Tatars' traditionally peaceful approach.[104] Writing in the spring of 2000 Ukrainian political analyst Natalya Belitser warned:

> The Crimean Tatar community represent the most organized, easily mobilized force in the ARC (Autonomous Republic of the Crimea), and a further delay in the adoption of legislative and normative acts for securing the full restoration of their rights is fraught with the danger of a more radicalized movement. This would result almost inevitably in a serious ethno-political conflict which might develop into something more severe than ever before.[105]

The rising level of tension among the Crimean Tatar community was clearly manifested in the spring of 1999. On April 8, 1999 as many as five thousand Crimean Tatars converged on Simferopol's parliament building to commemorate Russia's annexation of the Crimean Khanate on April 8, 1783. The frustrated Crimean Tatars demanded the resignation of the Crimean Republic president Leonid Grach, burned copies of the Crimean constitution and annex-

[104] Interview with *Adalet* President, Server Karimov. Simferopol, Fall 1997.

[105] Natalie Belitser. "The Constitutional Process in the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea in the Context of Interethnic Relations and Conflict Settlement." *Paper presented at the University of Birmingham, England.* March 10, 2000. In her discussion on the Crimean Tatars' identity, Belitser explained "Having come through so many ordeals in their recent history, the Crimean Tatars have developed a strong sense of self-identification as a coherent nation with distinct ethno-cultural and religious traditions to be restored, secured and bequeathed to the next generation. Their claim to self determination should be properly understood and acknowledged as stemming from an acute (and to a certain extent quite justifiable) fear of losing their identity through a gradual and apparently 'natural' assimilation into the Slavic majority of the peninsula."

ation manifesto of 1783, waved blue banners emblazoned with the *tarak tamgha* and demanded Ukrainian citizenship for the approximately 80,000 Crimean Tatar repatriates who had been excluded from citizenship.[106]

While this protest was not as volatile as a protest held in the previous year in which thousands of Crimean Tatars clashed with Crimean militia forces, this was largely due to the Crimean Tatar leadership's successful efforts to mute any violence. It is, however, not known how long Mustafa Dzhemilev, Refat Chuborov and other Crimean Tatar moderate politicians can keep the increasingly desperate Crimean Tatars from the path to greater assertiveness and perhaps violence in future.

As the 21st century unfolds it is to be hoped that the Ukrainian government will have greater success in solving the Crimean Tatars' problems and helping this long suffering people rebuild their culture than the Russian and Soviet governments before them. While the Ukrainian government seeks to de-emphasize the ethnic factor in the Crimea and treat the Crimean Tatar issue as one involving 'citizens of the Ukraine', the Crimean Tatars, who have suffered so much in the 20th century on the very basis of their ethnicity, will continue to mobilize on an ethno-national platform. For all intents and purposes the Crimean Tatar issue is now the Ukrainian government's 'nationality problem' and Kyiv's handling of the reintegration of the Crimean Tatars will be a litmus test of the Ukraine's ability to construct a civil society and become a full fledged European democracy.

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106 "Crimean Tatars Rally for Collective Rights." *Jamestown Monitor*. April 9, 1999.

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ILLUSTRATIONS
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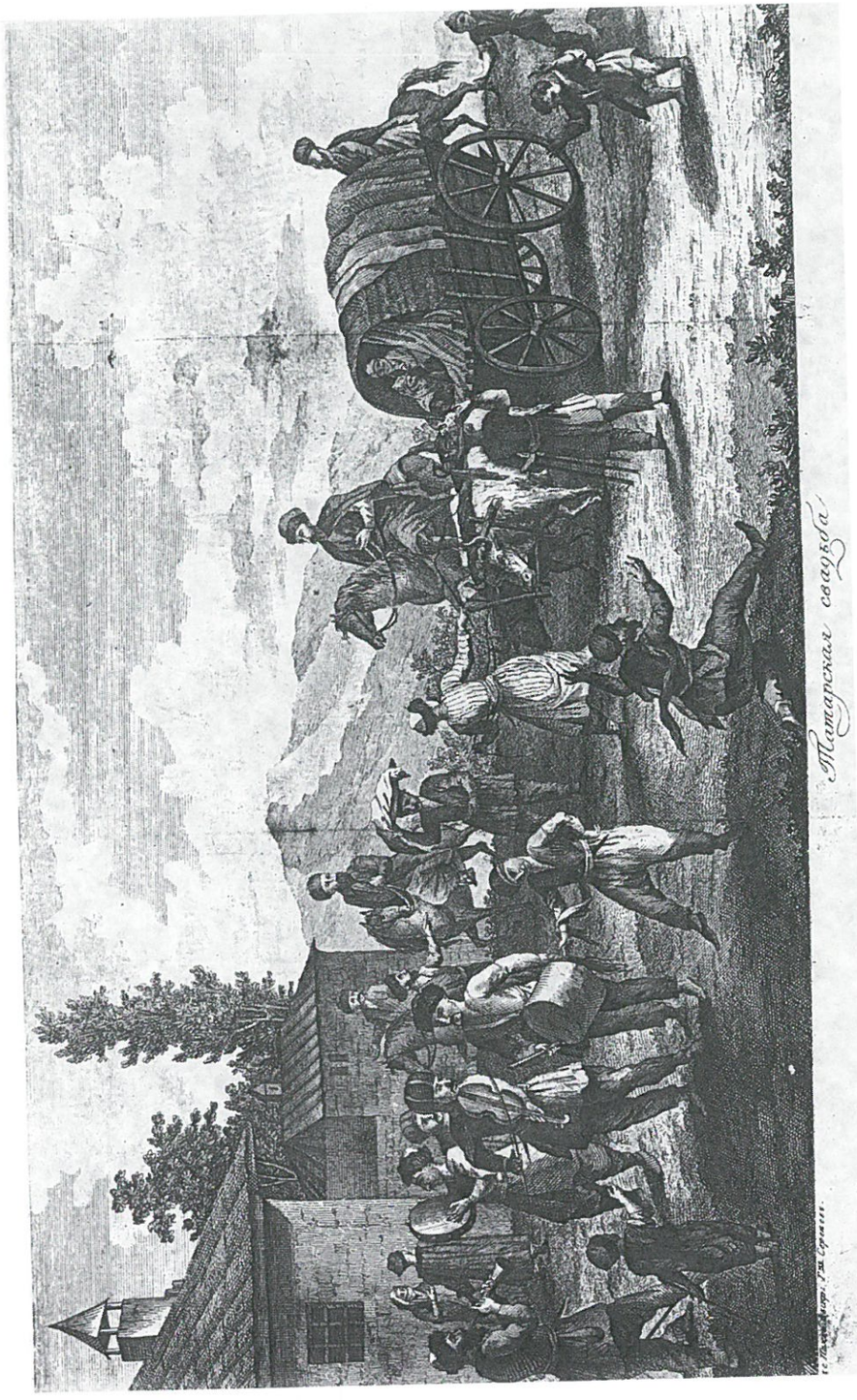
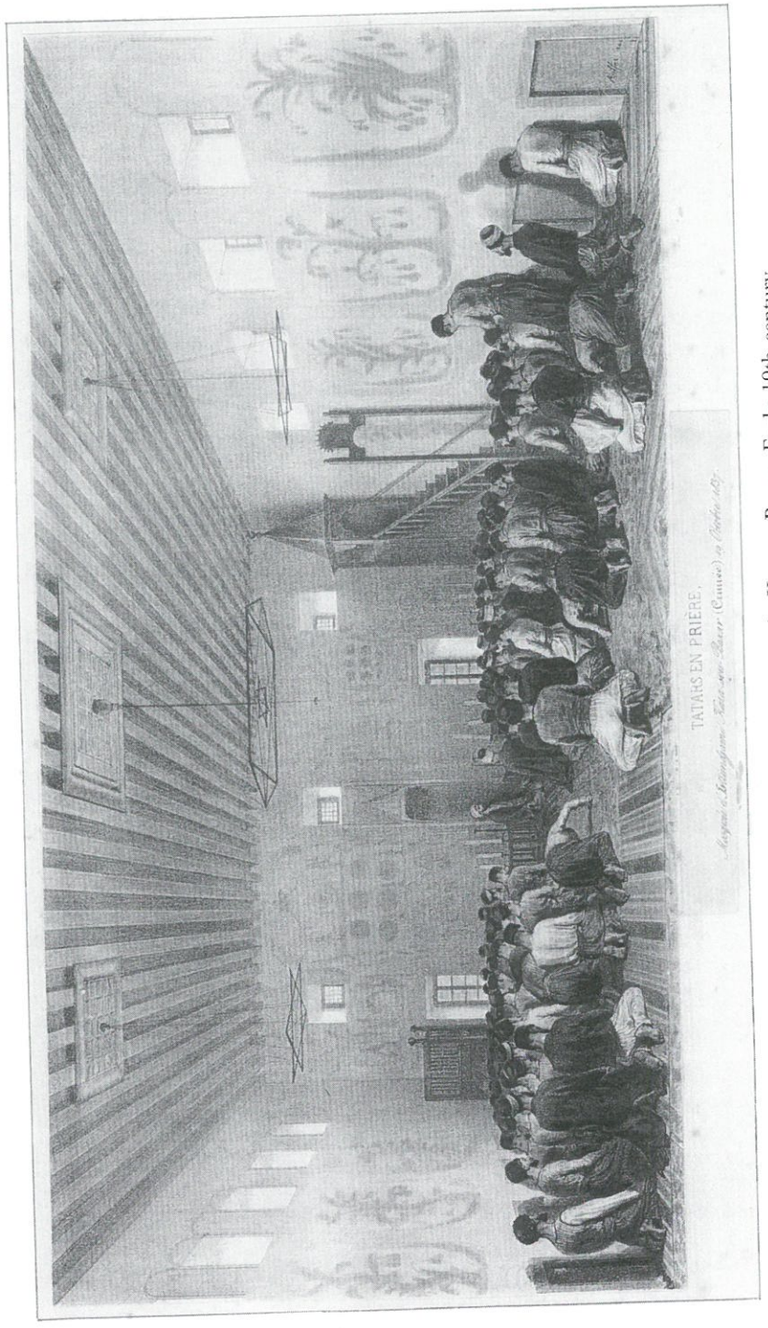
1. The Demır Kapi (The Iron Portal), within the Khan Saray complex, 16th century Bahçesaray, the Khan's capital.

2. The Tatar Khan and his cavalry fording a river without the use of bridges required by sedentary armies.

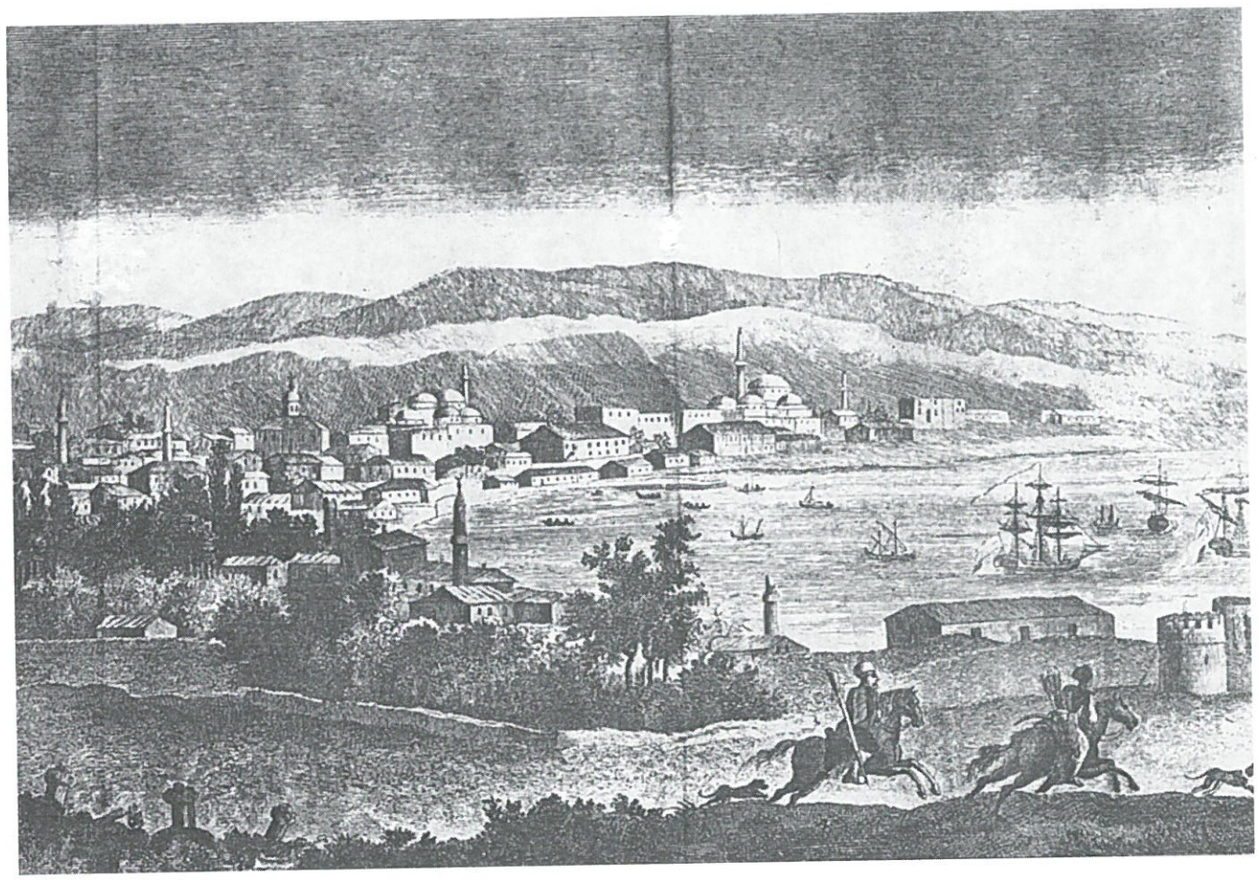


3. Crimean Tatar musicians playing at a wedding.

4. A Crimean Tatar wagon known as an *araba*.

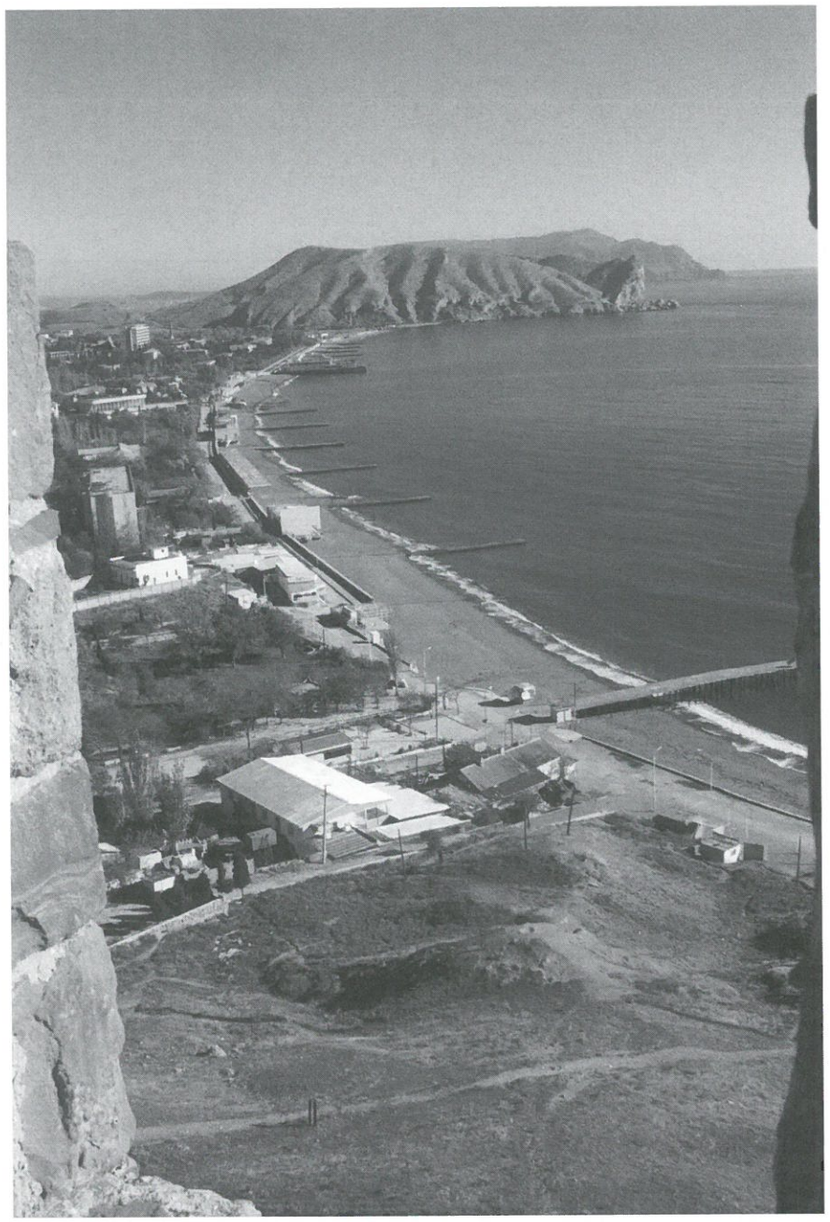


5. Crimean Tatars at prayer in a mosque in Karasu Bazar. Early 19th century.

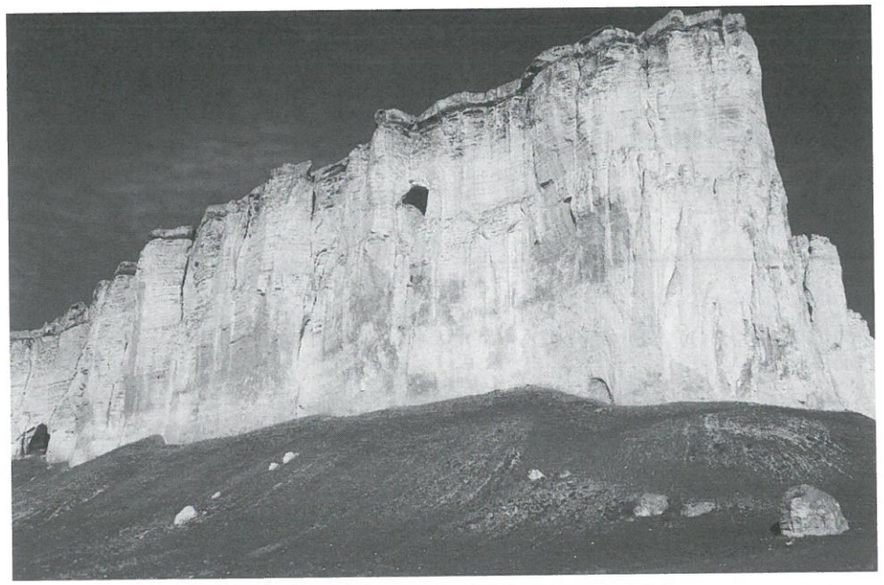


6. The western Crimean port of Evpatoriia, known to the Crimean Tatars as Gozleve.

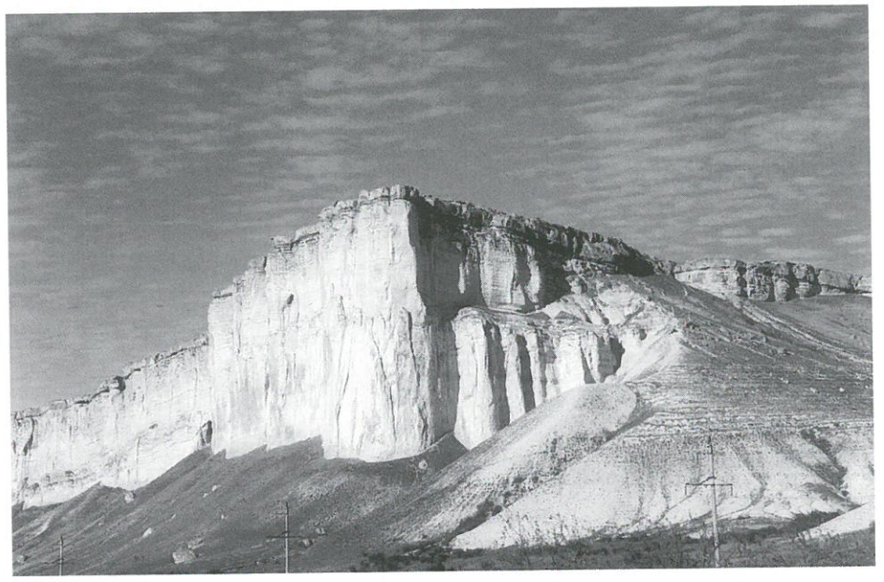
7. The 16th Century *Cuma Cami* (Friday Mosque) in Evpatoriia built by the famous Ottoman architect Sinan Pasha.



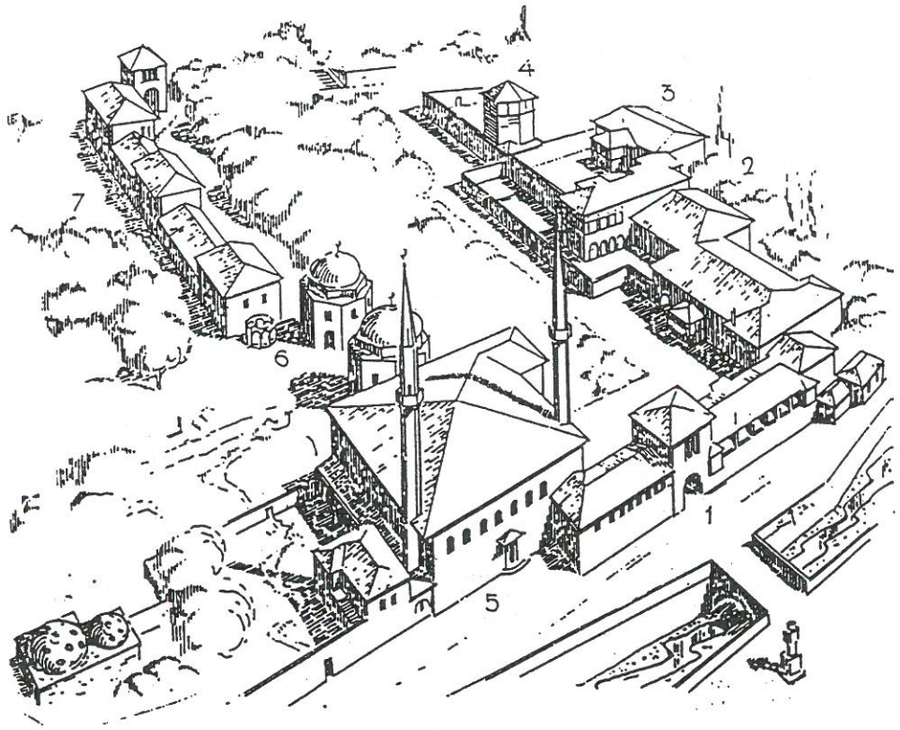
8. View of the Bay of Sudak from the walls of the Genoese Fortress.



9. The Shirinsky Rock (known as *Ak Kaya*, White Rock in Tatar) famous as the site of *kurul tays* (clan gatherings) to chose the new Crimean Khan. Karasu Bazar.



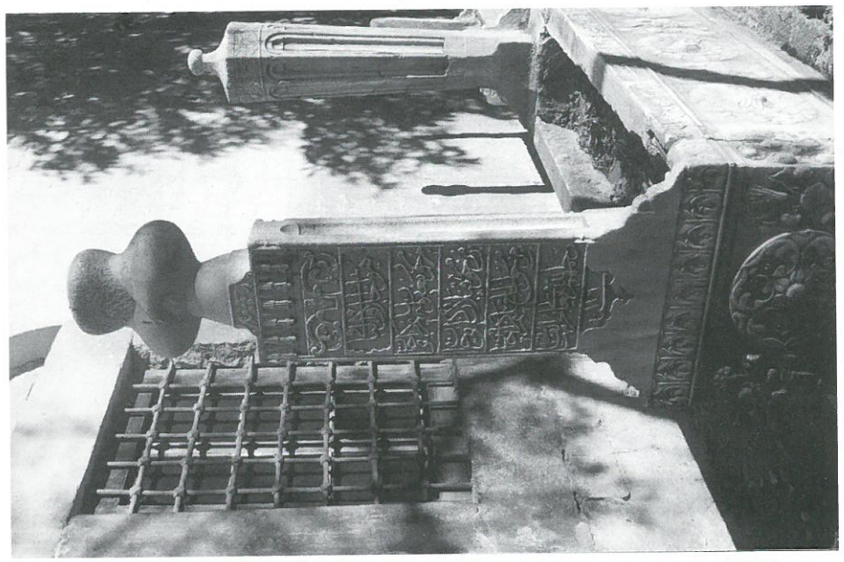
10. The Shirinsky Rock.



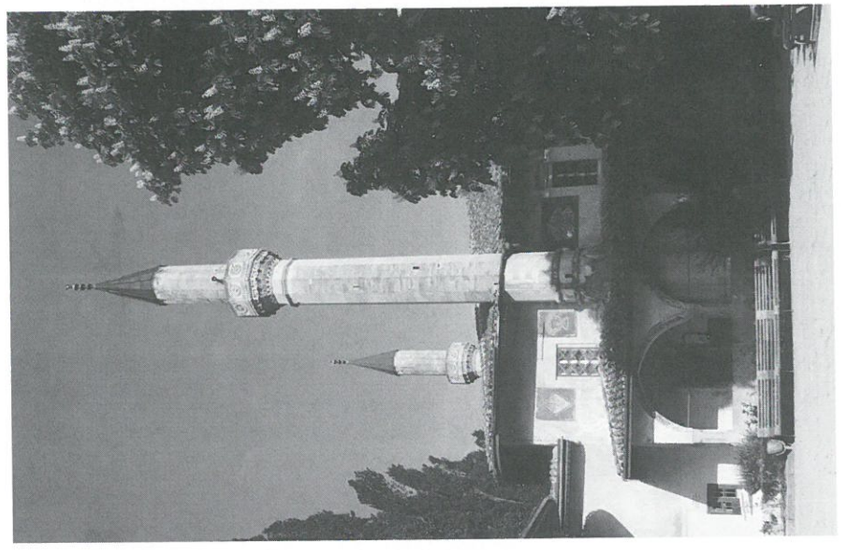
1. Royal entrance to Khansaray complex.
2. Main palace complex.
3. Harem.
4. Falcon Tower.
5. Khan Cami (Khan Mosque).
6. Royal Turbes (Mausoleums).
7. Stables.

11. The *Khan Saray* (Palace of the Khans) complex at Bahçesaray.

12. The Royal Portal, entrance to the *Khan Saray*.



14. Turban-capped marble grave of the Giray dynasty, *Khan Saray*.



13. The *Khan Cami* (Khan's Mosque) in the *Khan Saray*.

15. Crimean Tatar youth performing traditional dance, main courtyard of the *Khan Saray*.

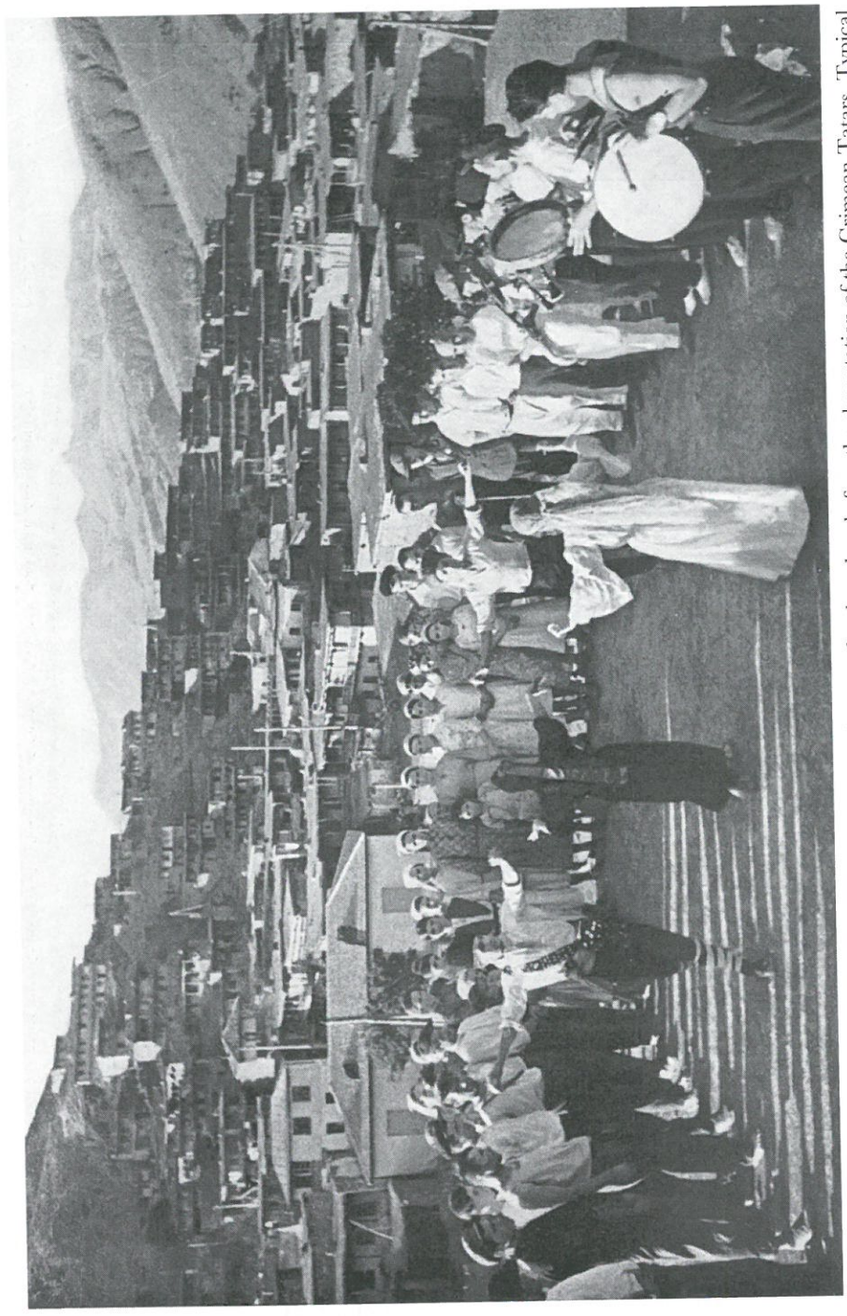
16. Divan room and harem. *Khan Saray*.

16a. From left to right, Crimean Tatar nationalist leaders Seytcelil Hattat, Hasan Sabri Ayvazov, Numan Çelebi Cihan and Cafer Seyd-Ahmet. Picture taken before Demir Kapi (Iron Gate) in the Khan Saray complex, Bahçesaray. Courtesy of Hakan Kırımlı.

17. The Yaila Mountains on the south Crimean coast near Yalta.

18. Traditional Crimean Tatar house with tiled roof, Simferopol.

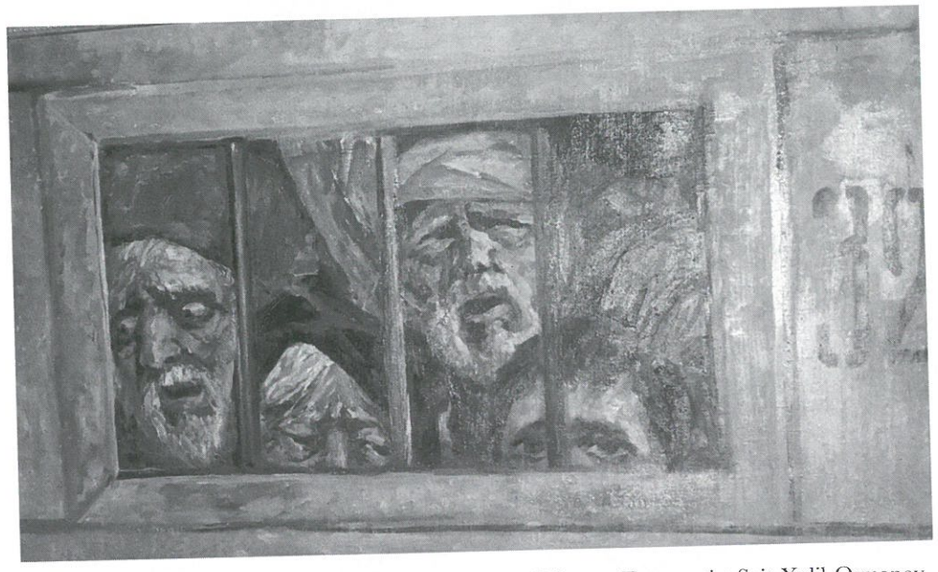
19. Traditional style Crimean Tatar house, Simferopol.



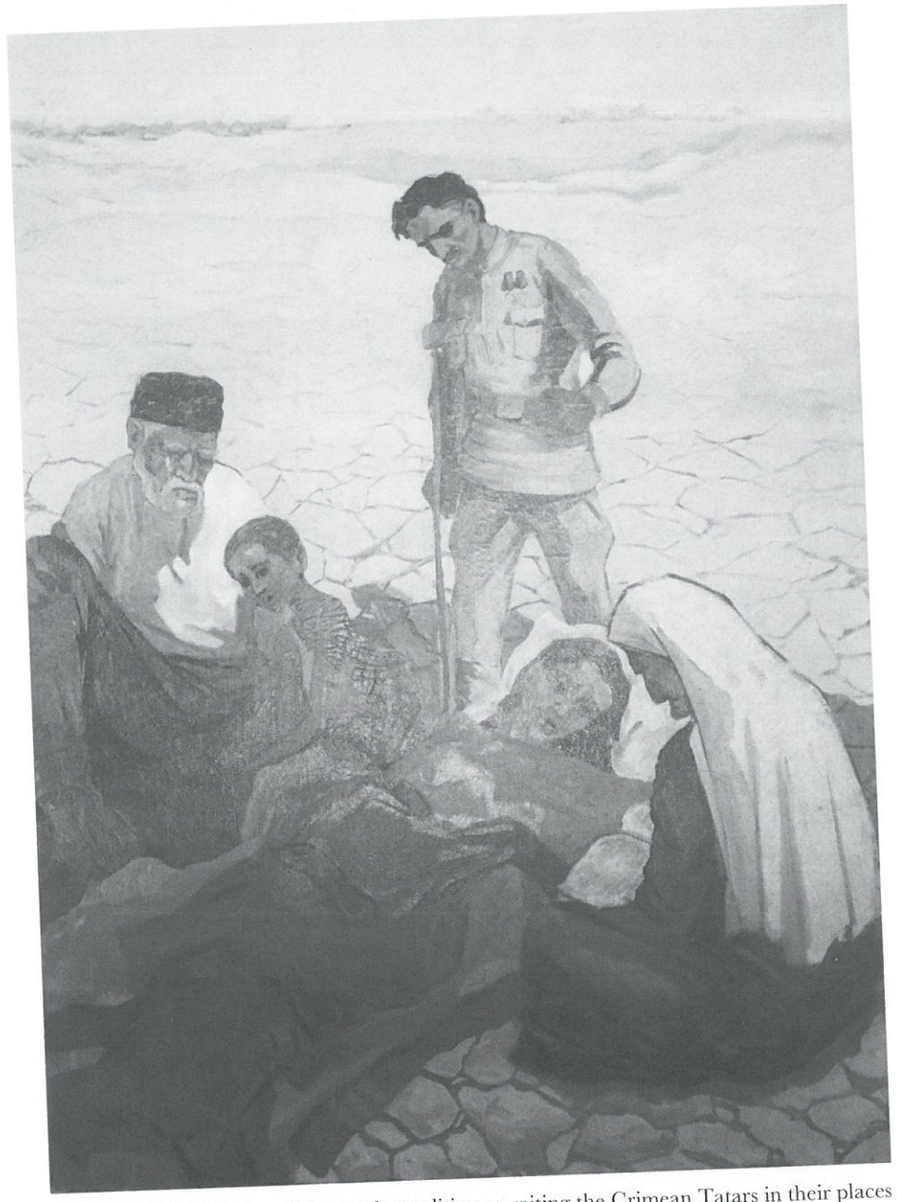
20. The village of Uskut in the south Crimean mountains, photograph taken days before the deportation of the Crimean Tatars. Typical terraced mountain village of the Crimean sub-ethnic group known as the Tats.

21. A rare photograph of Crimean Tatar deportees in transit from their homeland to their places of exile in Central Asia. Train station, Ust-Labinsk.

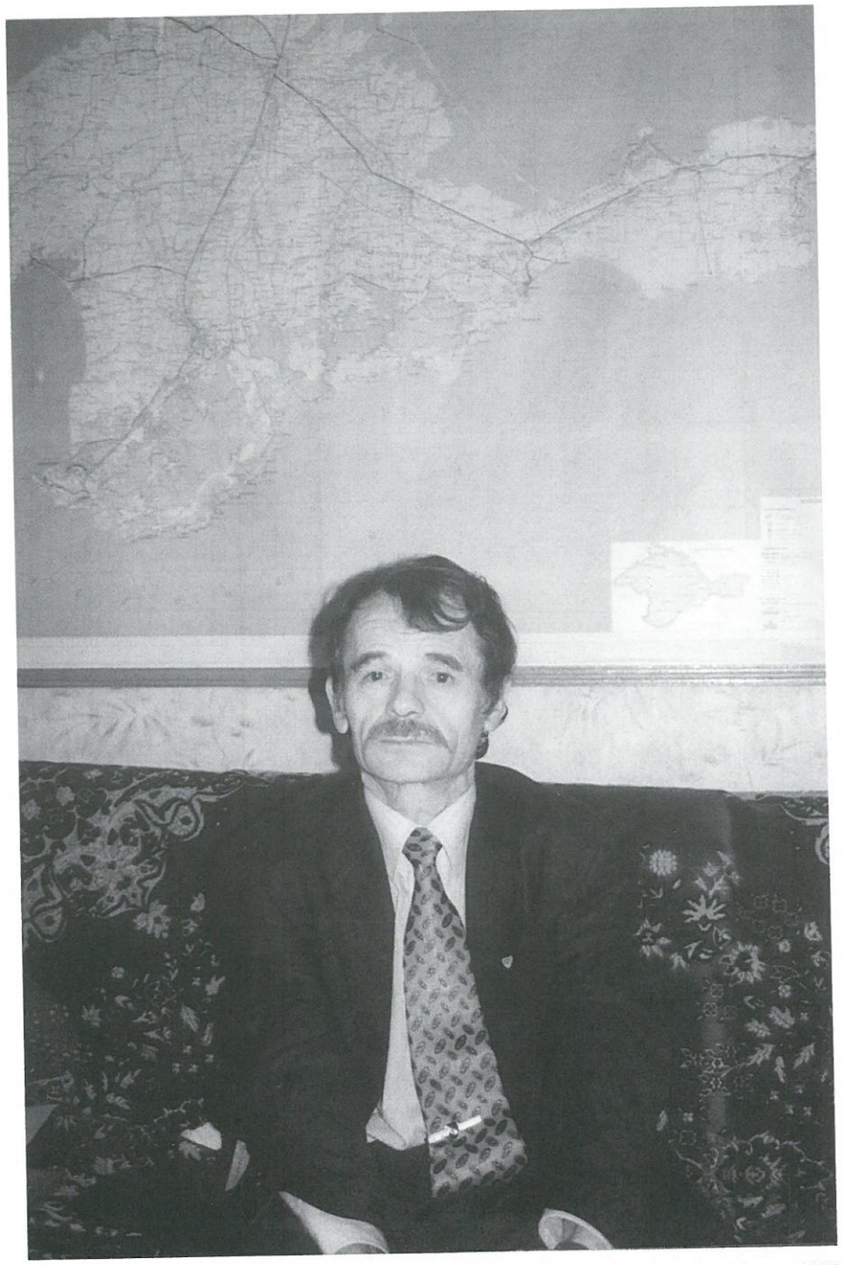
22. The horrors of the deportation as depicted by Crimean Tatar artist Rustem Eminov. Courtesy of Fikret Yurter.



23. '*Facia*' (Tragedy). The deportation as depicted by Crimean Tatar artist Seit Xalil Osmanov. Courtesy of Mubeyyin Batu Altan.

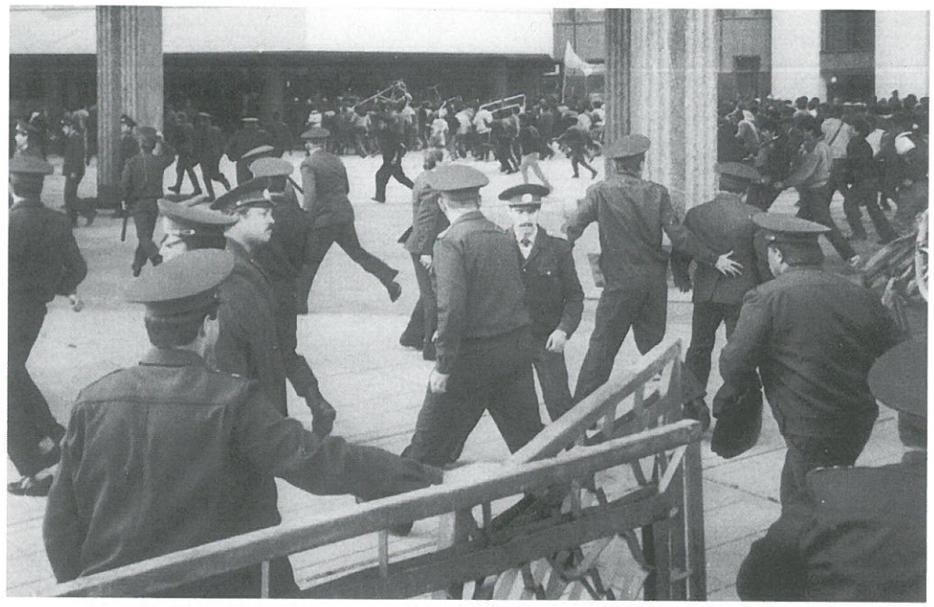


24. 'Malaria'. Depiction of the harsh conditions awaiting the Crimean Tatars in their places of exile in Soviet Central Asia by Seit Xalil Osmanov. Courtesy of Mubeyyin Batu Altan.



25. Crimean Tatar anti-Soviet dissident leader and head of the Crimean Tatar *Milli Mejlis* (People's Parliament), Mustafa Dzhemilev 'Kirimoglu' (Son of the Crimea). Mustafa Dzhemilev was influential in leading his people back to the Crimean homeland in the early 1990s.

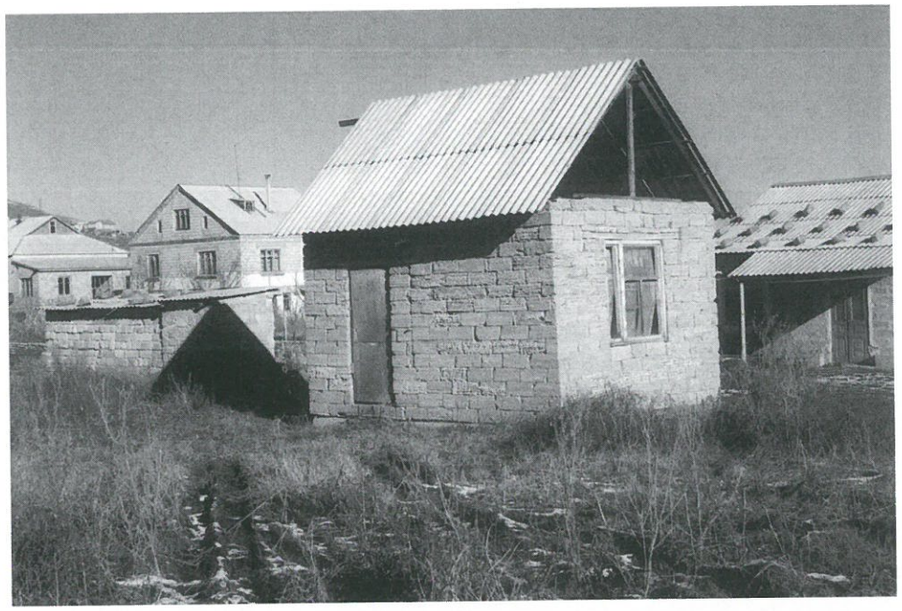
26. Soviet dissident activist Reshat Dzhemilev arrested for his efforts to return his people to the Crimea during the Soviet exile period.



27. October 1992, Simferopol. Crimean Tatar protesters attack the Crimean Parliament building demanding the release of their compatriots arrested during the destruction of the Crimean Tatar settlement at Krasnii Rai.

28. Simferopol. Crimean Tatar *samozakhvat* (self-seized) settlement with simple brick houses known as *samostroi* (self- constructs). The banner in the foreground reads in Tatar and Russian "Beloved Homeland! The land of our fathers and forefathers is sacred." Since their return from Central Asia scores of such primitive settlements have appeared in the Crimean countryside.

29. Russian marchers commemorating Soviet holiday in the port of Sevastopol. Several of the marchers are carrying portraits of Stalin, the Soviet leader responsible for the brutal deportation of the Crimean Tatar nation.

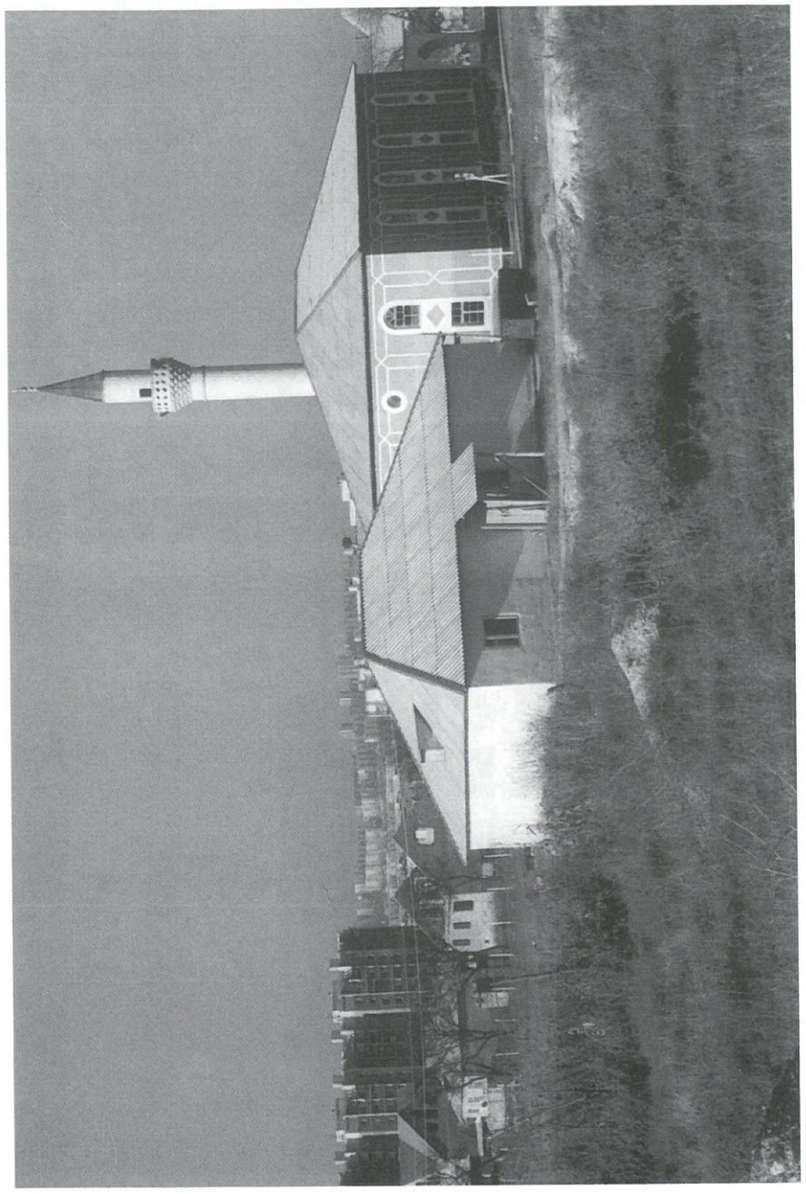


30. Primitive Crimean Tatar house (home to a family of 4), Crimean Tatar settlement of Marino, suburbs of Simferopol. This house demonstrates the stark conditions many impoverished Crimean Tatar settlers in the Crimea find themselves in.

31. *Samostroi* (self-built) Crimean Tatar house, Marino settlement, Simferopol.

32. One of many newly constructed simple mosques which have begun to appear throughout the Crimea since the return of the Crimean Tatar exiles. Settlement of Sary Su (Yellow River) between Simferopol and Belogorsk (Karasu Bazar).

33. Crimean Tatar settlers who have returned from their place of exile in Uzbekistan. Settlement of Fontany, Simferopol suburbs.



34. New simple concrete mosque built in settlement of Fontany overlooking the Crimean capital of Simferopol.

35. Newly erected Crimean Tatar grave featuring the *tarak tamgha* national symbol. Baidar Valley, southern Crimea.

TAKING AS ITS STARTING POINT THE ETHnogenesis of this ethnic group during the Mongol period (13th century), this volume traces their history through Islam, the Ottoman and the Russian Empires (15th and 17th century). The author discusses how Islam, Russian colonial policies and indigenous national movements shaped the collective identity of this victimized ethnic group.

Part two deals with the role of forced migration during the Russian colonial period, Soviet nation-building policies and ethnic cleansing in shaping this people's modern national identity. This work therefore also has wider applications *for those dealing with the construction of diasporic identities.* Taking a comparative approach, it traces the formation of Crimean Tatar diasporas in the Ottoman Balkans, Republican Turkey, and Soviet Central Asia (from 1944).

A theme which emerges through the work is the gradual construction of the Crimea as a national homeland by its indigenous Tatar population. It ends with a discussion of the post-Soviet repatriation of the Crimean Tatars to their russified homeland and the social and identity problems involved.

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